THE

NUMERICAL BIBLE

BEING

A REVISED TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES
WITH EXPOSITORY NOTES:

ARRANGED, DIVIDED, AND BRIEFLY CHARACTERIZED

ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THEIR

NUMERICAL STRUCTURE

FOURTH EDITION

THE PSALMS

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ORDER AND DIVISIONS OF THE BOOKS

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

1. THE BOOKS OF THE LAW :—

1. Genesis.
2. Exodus.
3. Leviticus.
4. Numbers.
5. Deuteronomy.

2. THE COVENANT-HISTORY :—

1. Joshua.
2. Judges.
   Ruth.
3. Kings :—
   First Book (*Samuel*).
   Second Book (*Kings*).
4. Captivity-Books :—
   Ezra.
   Nehemiah.
   Esther.
5. Chronicles.

3. THE PROPHETS :—

1. Isaiah.
2. Jeremiah.
   Lamentations.
3. Ezekiel.
4. Daniel.
5. The Book of Minor Prophets:—

   1. *Hosea.* *Amos.* *Micah.*
   2. *Joel.* *Obadiah.* *Jonah.*
   3. *Nahum.* *Habakkuk.* *Zephaniah.*
   4. *Haggai.* *Zechariah.* *Malachi.*

4. THE PSALM-BOOKS:—

1. The Psalms.
2. Job.
3. Solomon's Song.
4. Ecclesiastes.
5. Proverbs.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

1. THE GOSPELS :—

1. Matthew. Mark. Luke.
2. John.

2. THE ACTS.

3. THE PAULINE EPISTLES :—

1. Romans. Galatians. Ephesians. Colossians. *Philemon.* Philippians.
2. Thessalonians. *First Epistle.* *Second Epistle.* Corinthians. *First Epistle.* *Second Epistle.* Hebrews. Timothy. *First Epistle.* *Second Epistle.* Titus.

4. THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES :—

1. Peter.
   First Epistle
   Second Epistle.
2. James.
3. John.
   First Epistle.
   Second Epistle.
   Third Epistle.
4. Jude.

5. REVELATION.

PREFACE

IN sending forth the present volume of the Numerical Bible, I desire afresh to call attention to that structure of Scripture which its title indicates. The Book of Psalms furnishes a test as to the reality of this, the severity of which can hardly be exceeded. The Psalms are divided, by the very fact that they are such, into 150 portions, arranged (as is well-known) in five books. This, to begin with, must be taken as it is, and meaning found for it: we are not at liberty to alter anything. But this is the smallest matter: each *psalm* also is divided into verses, every one of which must be similarly respected as a divine landmark, not to be removed. But these amount in number to near 2,500 divisions more.* Then we have the alphabetical arrangement of certain psalms, notably the 9th, 10th and 119th. Besides all this, many of the psalms will be found to be grouped together by their titles, as the eight psalms of the "sons of Korah" (xlii–xlix,); the four Maskil-psalms (lii–lv,); the five Michtam-psalms following (lvi–lx); the eleven psalms of Asaph (lxxiii–lxxxiii); and the fifteen "songs of degrees" (cxx–cxxxiv). All such boundary-lines have been respected absolutely.

See then what is the problem before us. We have to find an interpretation of the Book of Psalms which will *accommodate itself*—to use, perhaps, as poor a word as one could find—to all these restrictions of the imagination, and in spite of all show itself to be *really* an interpretation. Moulding itself also in all parts to a numerical symbolism, to which every book, every division, every psalm, every verse, must be conformed! Imagine such an intricate web as this implies thrown over Scripture, and then to find that not only is the meaning not obscured by this, but actually brought out more clearly and enforced.

Let my reader test this for himself through any sufficient portion of the volume before him, and he will hardly fail with us to thank God for such a confirmation of the uniform inspiration of His holy Word, in days

* Exactly 2461.

like these when the denial of it is rampant. But more, he will thank Him also for such a help to fixed interpretation.

For the help of some who may be more disposed to receive it in this way, I have printed "The witness of arithmetic to Christ," as a first appendix, in the lecture-form in which it was first given. The symbolism of numbers—more fully worked out than hitherto—will be found in the second. The third applies it more systematically than I have attempted to do before, to the literal meaning of the first chapter of Genesis. The fourth may need more apology for its introduction here, while I am convinced of its very great importance for Christians everywhere: it is a plea for the study of the *whole* revelation of God, including in this not only the many sadly unfamiliar parts of Scripture itself, but of Nature also, a book which God Himself has published in every language. A short summary of the Messianic psalms is the last appendix.

The references are, as in the other volumes, by Mr. SAMUEL RIDOUT.

May He without whom nothing has any power or value, be with this attempt to set forth the meaning of His precious Word.

F. W. GRANT.

December 4th, 1896.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

Fourth Pentateuch of the Old Testament

The Experience Books

THE Psalms, with their kindred books, Job, Solomon's Song, Ecclesiastes, and Proverbs, make up the last division of the Old Testament,—a fourth Pentateuch, the utterance of the human heart in response to the divine revelation which in the former books has been made to it. In this way they fill their numerical place without any possibility of question.* They are thus also manifestly the utterances of *experience*,—characteristically this throughout, whatever other character (even at first sight opposed to this) they may at times exhibit.

Take as the most striking example of this the book of Psalms. In this we find, as all are aware, many evident prophecies of Christ in His Person and work; and prophecy and experience might seem insusceptible of any proper combination. Yet in fact it is mainly from personal experience that the web of prophecy in them is woven; the historic type which is found in the earlier books being here transferred from the external sphere to the internal. David thus fittingly becomes the author of prophetic psalms, in which the Spirit of God spake by him, and His word was in his tongue. Divine inspiration was here necessary in the fullest sense, that, as with all other prophets (1 Pet. i. 11), he might be guided better than he knew. How *much* better, the twenty-second psalm alone would be sufficient witness, where sufferings peculiar to Christ, and things that could be only said of Him, are found, and yet the voice is that of the unique Sufferer, the language still that of experience, even while we cannot believe that David or any other possible speaker of the time had in fact that experience. The discussion of such points will be found when we come to the psalms themselves with which they are connected: it is enough here to remind ourselves

* According to the Hebrew, rabbinic, arrangement, (for it is really no more,) they form, however, part of a *third* division, the *Kethubim*, or "writings"; and they are there associated with historical and prophetical books, as elsewhere noticed (Vol. II., p. 5), in a disorder which has nothing to recommend it to a spiritual mind. Upon this there is no need to dwell again.

of that remarkable experimental character which at least cannot be denied to run through the book.

Job, the Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, all plainly give us experiences also, the fruits of which are harvested for us in Proverbs, and the grain beaten out. Proverbs is thus the experimental Deuteronomy, the fresh giving of the law as ascertained and justified by experience; and is thus the fitting close of the Old Testament as a whole. Its peculiar form is thus perfectly explained.

The Order of the Books,

as given by their numerical significance, is different from that found in our common Bibles, which seems based upon the age of the (supposed) authors. Job, thus, by whomsoever written, is the oldest and comes first; the Psalms next, as characteristically the Psalms of David; and last come the three books of Solomon—Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song. But there is no uniform arrangement of these books in the MSS, and no trace of a divine order in any of them. If the Pentateuchal analogy and the numbers do not help us, then we have no help. Thank God, they speak here plainly, and thus with the most absolute authority. Let us look at them briefly in this way.

1. Psalms.

We have seen that the first book of any series has a comparative largeness of character such as above all therefore, naturally, the book of Genesis will be found to have. The number is that of precedence and sovereignty, and thus of the divine counsels, though not necessarily manifested yet as in direct prophecy, which we find in its place as *third* of the great divisions of Scripture. This exactly agrees with the character of prophecy as found in the Psalms, and which has been already glanced at, while their fullness of meaning will be thus easily intelligible. The book will thus be found full of divine mysteries,—of secrets only spoken in the ear of faith.

This peculiar prophetic character is found more or less throughout the whole of it, and distinguishes it at once from every other book except one, which could not however by any possibility fill the first place here, being destitute entirely of the fullness which we find in the Psalms. This is the Song of Solomon. The persons here are typically prophetic, and the book is a "mystery" throughout; but the Song falls naturally into the third place as we shall see, and the breadth of the divine counsels cannot be contained in its eight brief chapters, wonderful as indeed these are.

The second characteristic of the Psalms is just that they *are* "psalms." The Hebrew word means rather "hymns" or "praises" (*tehillim*); but everywhere the swell and harmony of poetry and music link themselves with this. The soul in its various moods and most opposite circumstances is controlled and harmonized by the felt presence of God. The

one God over all, in all, brings all seeming discords into unity. Change and movement are but the rhythm of a central Life, pulsating in true heart-beats through the whole frame of nature. And thus even inanimate things are bidden to join in the song which heaven to earth sends forth, and earth to heaven. God dwells amid these praises, reigns in them: they are the witness of how stable His kingdom is; "the world" too "is established that it cannot be moved."

Thus in its praise and prophecy alike the reign of God is seen in the book of Psalms. The voices of the universe speak *of* and *to* Him. Exercises and experiences leave Him Master still. And thus the Psalms fill the first place in this Pentateuch, and could fill no other.

2. Job.

Job as a name has two permissible meanings according to the lexicographers, both of them also suiting well his history. It may mean "one assailed" or "treated as an enemy." It may mean "one who turns,"—by implication the "penitent." This last word naturally connects itself with the grand crisis in his history which opens the way for his restoration to full blessing (ch. xlii. 6). The former better connects with his history throughout. Let us consider them.

The "penitent" presents Job in a most important character when we remember that he is certified by God Himself as the best man of his time on earth. And yet this repentance of his at an after-time is not simply his judgment of himself for wild words uttered or thoughts indulged under the pressure of calamities which have overtaken him. His own words show that it was a true turning-point in his life. Up to that time he had heard of God by the hearing of the ear only; now his eye saw Him. He was brought for the first time really into the light of His presence, which now for the first time therefore revealed him to himself. Hence the spotlessness of his conduct which he once had built upon could not now satisfy him: the depths of his heart had been revealed: he abhors—not his sins, but—*himself*, and repents in dust and ashes.

But this will have deeper significance if we compare it with a lesson prominent in Ecclesiastes, where the *wisest* man is unveiled to us, as here the *best*. Solomon's wisdom also is accredited by God, just as Job's goodness is; only in result to be shown folly, as Job's goodness is owned vileness. The comparison here must be surely intended to be made, and be of some universal interest; and so it is: for here in fact is the moral question settled which was left to be settled respectively by Jew and Gentile. For the Jew the law raised Job's question, "How shall man be just with God?" to which the death of the Lord was the only possible answer: "When we were yet without strength in due time Christ died for the ungodly." The Gentile question was different, though Christ was still the answer: "When, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of the

preaching to save them that believe: . . . we preach Christ crucified . . . the wisdom of God."

Notice that in these two books, Job and Ecclesiastes, the questions are worked out differently: Job, the Gentile, works out, apart from law, that which for the Jew was settled under the law—the unrighteousness of man. Solomon, the Jew, with his God-given wisdom, and revelation too in his hand, fails nevertheless, equally with the Gentile who had neither, to find by searching the wisdom needed by the world.

The questions are thus shown to be as universal, as the answers when found are found for all. Job and Ecclesiastes in this way have a world-wide interest and significance.

And yet it does not seem as if Job had its full meaning in that important lesson given, the vileness of the world's best man. Job the "penitent" is hardly the whole truth here. It does not sufficiently explain either the attack of the enemy, the various and diffuse reasoning as to the government of God, and least of all the closing vision and appeal of God Himself; although it connects itself with all these. The subject of the book is larger than this, while it includes it; and here the other meaning of the name, Job "the assailed," agrees with the numerical place of the book, while it suggests a subject which is large enough to cover all its argument, and important enough to claim the separate consideration which is here afforded it.

That subject is "the mission," or perhaps better still, "the ministry of evil;" Job, the saint of God, yet "assailed" by the enemy, the example of it. *Part* of its ministry is seen in this that it helps to bring Job to the knowledge of himself, though not without that personal vision of God to which he himself ascribes it: Satan's sieve and the Lord's look are similarly related in the gospel story, as means whereby the self-confidence of Peter is broken down in bitter tears of repentance.

Job fills then, clearly, the second place among the "books of experience."

3. Solomon's Song.

The Song of songs gives us experiences of another order. It is a song of the heart, a *marriage* song, which has been held by faith in all ages to be an allegory of spiritual things. The natural relation is used in Scripture itself as thus figuring that of Jehovah with Israel according to the Old Testament, that of Christ and the Church in the New Testament application. As a book of the Old Testament, we must take the bride primarily to be the earthly bride, but with the higher and heavenly application everywhere shining through. With such a theme as this, we need not wonder at the difficulties of interpretation with which the book abounds. It is a song for the sanctuary: it is only in the sanctuary we can read it aright. There is no need to enter into it further here. It most evidently fills the third place.

4. Ecclesiastes.

As clearly the book of the "Preacher" fills the fourth. It is the *testing of the world*, by one who has full knowledge of it,—the search into a problem with which man's heart is ever exercised, but the solution of which is never found in the way sought. He would fain find good where it is not to be found, and where the search only results in bitter disappointment, "vanity and vexation of spirit." He is a king, with all the absolute power of a king. The treasures of earth are in his lap. He has will to find what he is in quest of. He has wisdom to back his will. "What shall the man do that cometh after the king?" The experiment is thus made once for all: it can never need to be repeated. The end finds him as bankrupt in wisdom as in material resources,—humbled, so as to find it now with God; but the world fallen and away from Him; under the stamp of death therefore, and passing away; man's good in it to fear Him and to do His will, whom presently he is to meet in judgment.

That is no gospel, surely; nor is the faded king to be the preacher of this. He has one text only, and cleaves to it; simple, yet needing to be pondered, and emphasized by its isolation from all else. And we need still to ponder it.

5. Proverbs.

Only Proverbs remains, and already we have remarked upon its Deuteronomic character. The will of God is here declared in short, clear-cut sentences, not indeed as law, but as maxims of experience, suited to the books among which we are, and which show the path through the world for him who seeks it. It is a human voice permitted, for our encouragement and exhortation, to come after and set its seal to the divine. "Yet how plainly do we see, in this book of moral results, the Deuteronomy, in a sense, of the whole Old Testament, that, except in type and shadow, the heavenly things are not yet come! The glory shines not yet on a road tracked by pilgrim feet. Prophecy and promise do but beckon us onward; and the Old Covenant testifies, in its brightest revelations, to what is beyond itself."

RESULTS OF THIS HUMAN VOICE IN INSPIRATION.

"The human element in inspiration" has been sufficiently dwelt upon of late by the "higher criticism" of the day. It has been given indeed so great a prominence—set, we may say, in so great authority—as to enfeeble and bring everywhere into subjection to it the divine. We have been given to know so fully—what was never doubtful—that the writers of Scripture were *men*, that now the doubt has come to be on the other side, whether we may safely any longer call what they have written the "word of God."

On the other hand, for some who are as far as possible from this, it may be needful to point out, in the books to which we have come, a

peculiar feature due to the fact that they are, as we have seen, in a sense in which the previous books were not, really the voice of man. They are largely the utterances of human experience; they are often the records of human searching; they are sometimes the expression of human ignorance, of doubt, of error, of unbelief. All is given us as permitted and controlled of infinite Wisdom for our instruction and blessing: there is nothing at random, not a word that has escaped from this control. Yet we are in fact on very different ground when we are listening to the arguments of Job and his friends, or to the recital of what the "preacher" had once "said in his heart," while he was "proving" it with mirth or with folly, or "seeking out by wisdom" the solution of the problem of the world, from what we are on when we listen to Isaiah's prophecies, or even trace out the language of an inspired historian.

This should be quite evident, and it may seem to some useless to spend words upon such a matter as this. No one is in danger of believing that what the devil says is true, because we find it recorded in the pages of inspiration. And as to Job's friends, we are told by God himself that they had not spoken of Him the thing that was right, as His servant Job had. (Job xlii. 7.) Job had also failed surely, as his own confession implies (xl. 5); so that of much of the book it is clear that it contains thoughts and reasonings of men instead of the certain truth as God gives it. It has pleased Him that the workings of the human heart should be told out freely before Him, to find needed answer from Him. In Job we have it in Elihu and the words of God Himself ere the book closes.

Ecclesiastes, still more than Job, gives us these reasonings; but which the writer himself works out for us to a right conclusion. Infidelity, materialism, and what not, show themselves in his first thoughts therefore, and materialism especially has sheltered itself under some of his words, but without a shadow of justification when the character of the book is realized. Indeed everywhere, we may be sure, God has given us the clearest marks of distinction between what is of Himself and what is only the working of man's mind. But this last is also of the greatest interest, and profit to us too, to have before us; they come under the apostle's general rule as to inspired Scripture, and are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." We may be sure of this beforehand; we shall have the detailed proof as we go on.

The three remaining books are of a different character from these two; and in them the human voice is not simply controlled by but harmonized with the divine wisdom; and are thus either true songs, as are the Psalms and the Song itself, or precepts, as the Proverbs. The allowance of human thoughts is necessarily limited, as it is plainly marked off from the rest; but we have cause to thank God for what has been permitted.

SCOPE AND DIVISIONS OF THE PSALMS

THE PSALMS, then, are the uttered harmony of the soul of man under all experiences, a harmony which has its source in God himself, the free obedience of the heart to Him. The unity of God as Creator ensures the unity of creation as His work: man therefore, as obedient to Him through grace, returns into this unity of creation, finds in Him his oneness with himself, his voice in the universal song: for him not without speech, but moral and intelligent. His heart is itself the harp from which the divine hand brings richest music; and that in adversity as in prosperity, in sorrow as in joy. Thus every kind of trial finds its place in the Psalms: there is the minor key as well as the major; ending at last in a tide which carries everything before it, and sweeps out of time into eternity, a perpetual anthem of immortal praise.

That the counsels of God should have their place in this, and make the Psalms largely prophetic as they are, is a matter of course. The blessing that flows back to God has flowed forth *from* God. The thought that has shaped the ages was that of a Divine Mind before the ages were. The creature has done his best (or worst) against it. The patience of God has given evil its time; that it might be seen in its full character, and judged fully as thus shown. It has uttered its last word and made its plea before the court of the universe, and failed. Goodness has only the more been displayed; grace has become the wonder of eternity: the throne of God has become that also of the Lamb; to God and His creature wedded in the Person of the Redeemer, henceforth never to be sundered, every knee bows and every tongue confesses Jesus Christ as Lord to the glory of God the Father.

For the mysteries of God as made known in Christianity, however, we have still to go to the New Testament. The horizon of the Psalms is earthly. The people of God in it are earthly people. Jehovah's bride is Israel, not the Church. Not even does the Spirit in the believer cry "Abba, Father;" God's fatherly relation to *Israel* being quite different from this: for it is not founded upon new birth, nor contemplates eternity, but time and the earth. Christian unity is not that of a nation, but a communion of saints.

Yet in fact the writers of the psalms *are* saints, and in all that is fundamental to this, whatever the dispensation, we are upon common ground. Beyond this the typical character of Israel comes in to enlarge in every direction the spiritual view, and make the Psalms often fuller in meaning for the Christian than for believing Israel they could ever be.

None the less must we heedfully acknowledge the Israelite character. As Old Testament prophecy the blessing of the Psalms connects itself with the future blessing of Israel according to the new covenant; the

nation becoming the channel of grace and mercy to the nations around; the centre from which it radiates being the temple-throne of God in Jerusalem, His law going forth from Zion, and the kings of the earth bringing *there* their willing tribute of praise and worship. In connection with this final condition we find the whole history of the chosen people entered into, the special interest concentrated upon two crises of controlling significance, the first and second coming of Messiah to them: the first time, though rejected, to accomplish that which is, for them and for us, the righteous and only foundation of all blessing; the second, to bring in for them nationally the blessing itself, after a disciplinary trial of short duration but unprecedented severity, in which they are brought in repentance and faith to receive their King. This is the "time of Jacob's trouble," the travail-time in which they are new born in order to enter the kingdom of God. These are the prophetic events to which the Psalms give all the pathos of their profound emotion, all their variety of ethical expression, all their glow of divine light. They live and move before us, riveting our attention, inviting our judgment, rousing our affections, interpreted everywhere into the language of the conscience and the heart.

It will naturally follow that the Psalms cannot rightly be treated, as they too generally are, as if independent of one another, or without systematic order, or a well-defined basis of fact or doctrine. On the contrary, they will only be read with due intelligence when it is seen that each individual psalm has its suited place and organic connection with reference to the whole, and to the doctrine and prophecy of the Old Testament,—nay, of the entire word of God. The psalms are individually much what the words in a sentence are to this, and must be studied with reference to the whole. And here once more the numerical structure comes to test and give precision to the meaning in every part. The arrangement is such as that, if it will bear the numerical test, it must needs be pronounced divine. We propose with the utmost stringency to submit it to this test.

It is well known that the Psalms are in Hebrew divided into five books, which the Jews have called "the Pentateuch of David." Delitzsch admits that there appears in these a certain imitation of the Thora (the law). We have had so many instances of this as to expect rather than be surprised at it. These divisions are as follows:—

1. (Ps. i.–xli.)—Christ in the counsel of God the source of all blessing for His people (Israel).
2. (Ps. xlii.–lxxii.)—Their ruin, but redemption in the latter days.
3. (Ps. lxxiii.–lxxxix.)—The holiness of God in His dealings with them.
4. (Ps. xc.–cvi.)—The failed first man replaced by the Second, and the world established under His hand.
5. (Ps. cvii.–cl.)—The moral conclusion as to the divine ways, in which God and man are found at last together.

NOTES.

MANY things that are usually put in an introduction we shall consider probably better as we come to them. Gems look better in their settings—God's gems assuredly do: the connection of psalm with psalm, so necessary for the knowledge of them individually, makes much plain as to their application; the numerical symbolism, here as elsewhere, gives precision to and confirms the meaning. Best it seems, therefore, to settle as little as possible at the beginning, and to make our notes take the shape very much of an inductive study, looking at each question as it arises, and as the means of settling it are in our hand. We shall find thus, I doubt not, that God has provided, in the orderly arrangement of the matter, for the progressive understanding of it, though we shall have always to say with the apostle. "We know in part, and we prophesy in part."

The divisions (or Books) of the Psalms are given in the Revised Version; and it will be seen that the first three books (ending with Ps. xli., lxxii., lxxxix.,) are closed with a double Amen; the fourth, with "Amen, Hallelujah;" the fifth ends with five Hallelujah psalms. The number five clings to the whole book; five being, as we have seen, as 4 + 1, the weak with the Strong, the creature with the Creator, but thus bringing in the governmental ways of God with man, and his responsibility and exercise under this government. The Psalms are 150 in number (3 x 5 x 10), and the five books are a perfect Pentateuch, as we have said.

THE FIRST BOOK,

as giving the counsel of God as to Christ, does not on that account contain *all* the Messianic psalms, as we see at once. In fact there are more outside than within it; but those found here are the leading ones as regards His office, person, and work. His kingship in Israel, affirmed in the second psalm, widens in the eighth into full earth-empire as the Son of Man. The sixteenth shows the perfection of His life among men, the ground of appeal to God against His enemies in the seventeenth, which is answered in the eighteenth, His foes being put under His feet. The twenty-second reveals the sin-offering character of His work, as the fortieth does its perfection as the burnt-offering. The forty-first closes the book by showing the double and opposite result for faith and for unbelief respectively. These psalms govern and give character to all the others, as we see; and thus the book as a whole gives us "Christ as the source of blessing for His people."

The plan of the book, and, more or less, of the whole of the psalms, is, as another has remarked, that "some great truth or historical fact is brought forward as to Christ or the remnant."—the faithful in Israel.—"or both, and then a series of psalms follows, expressing the feelings and sentiments of the remnant in connection with that truth or fact." (*Synopsis.*) Thus the human exercises are seen in relation to such truths, often embodied in the historic facts, and which the historic fact also embodies. This involves a very distinct and purposive grouping of the psalms, as is plain, and prepares us to see spiritual order throughout them. Nor are the series thus formed hard to be discerned in general, often being marked off by their authors, as those of Asaph or of the sons of Korah,—sometimes by their character as "Maschil" or "Michtam" psalms, or "Songs of degrees,"—often the subject alone being quite sufficient for the purpose, as soon as we begin fairly to entertain the thought of such divisions. That the titles should be found to have such uses goes far to prove their trustworthiness, so much in dispute; but this will be examined as we go on.

The first book has three subdivisions:—

1. (Ps. i.–viii.) Christ ordained King in Zion, and, after rejection by His people, to wider rule as Son of Man.
2. (Ps. ix.–xv.) The enemy and Antichrist, with the conflict and final deliverance.
3. (Ps. xvi.–xli.) Christ in the midst of the people, manifesting God for them, and sanctifying them to God.

Thus in these three subdivisions the character of the first book is made clear; the two main ones being separated by one which shows us the opposition in man and the evil to be overcome, without which the view of Christ Himself could not be rightly seen.

Let us notice that in the first of these subdivisions we have, first of all, *two* parts, which give us the theme, and of which the second at least is strictly Messianic; the third section, with only one psalm, is again Messianic; the middle section, which expresses those exercises of the faithful-hearted which are the result of the rejection of the King, consisting of *five* parts, the number which speaks of exercise. In the second subdivision (ix.–xv.), which speaks of the strife with evil, there are but two sections: two psalms in the first again, giving the theme; *five* once more giving the exercises. But in the third subdivision we return to an arrangement similar to that of the first, though larger: here *nine* psalms (xvi.–xxiv.) are characteristically Messianic; the remnant psalms are increased correspondingly to *three* fives (xxv.–xxxix.); and two Messianic psalms close the book. (xl., xli.) Certainly in all this there is order, and the numerals are significant throughout, or as suited as if *meant* to be significant. Shall we not find in each psalm, as we study it, proof of a divine wisdom which has put each in its place as definitely as the earth into its orbit, and arranged its every detail to convey to us clear and consistent meaning?

Is it not good to have this assurance of a divine hand, just there where we are most in danger of seeing only the human? And may we not with corresponding earnestness take up what God has in His grace thus elaborated, to make us realize His handy-work in it?

SUBD. 1.

The first eight psalms are naturally an introduction, not merely to the first book of the psalms, but to the whole. We have Christ as King on *Zion*, but rejected by the banded nations, the threatening of wrath to come for this, but the time of long-suffering too, which is salvation to those who in submission "kiss the Son." We find that, though rejected by the nation of Israel, the people with whom He is in connection are still Israel, if only a remnant of them. Judgment is drawing nigh for the world, the evil which is growing to a head, and its opposition to God and to His own is becoming ever fiercer: so that at last the prayer of the righteous is turned into a cry for judgment, which is not reproved. Yet the fire through which this people pass is to them a necessary purification. They are made to face and bottom the question of sin, until mercy becomes their only plea. It is the time of Jacob's trouble, and Joseph's brethren begin to realize their soul-hunger which will yet bring them penitents to Him. But in this introductory part all is touched as yet with a light hand. We see them humbled that He may exalt them, and we realize that they are accepted, their prayer is answered. But for this deliverance judgment must take its course, and now it does so: Jehovah is praised according to His righteousness, which has acted in the overthrow of the wicked, and is now manifested as in truth "Jehovah most High."

So ends the seventh—the fifth remnant psalm. It is followed by a totally different strain, as an *eighth* psalm, that of a new period, the celebration of a Man and the Son of man, through whom, set over the whole earth, Jehovah's Lordship is realized and His Name made excellent in all the earth, and man himself is seen as worthy of the original place to which God the Creator destined him. The application can only be to One, and to Him the epistle to the Hebrews accordingly applies it. (Heb. ii. 6–9.)

Thus we have reached the point beyond which the Psalms do not go, and the next is therefore plainly a retrogression. The first series is in this way clearly marked off, and is complete in itself. The details we are presently to consider; but it should be plain at once that here is no fortuitous collection of ill-assorted lyrics. Whoever wrote, whoever gathered them, there is a common life that unites them all; they are organically joined together.

Moreover, the scheme to which they are related is distinctly prophetic; purpose, and a divine purpose, rules the whole: whether written in exilic or pre-exilic times, to classify them in this way would give no clue to their meaning,—shed upon them no ray of light. The *how* of their production is of very small importance compared with the *why* of their design. They contemplate the last days and the nearing judgment. They project themselves beyond the immediate horizon of the times in which they were written and link together days which are for us now already past, and which have confirmed them as true prophecy, and days which are even yet to come. Every detail throughout is in accordance with this.

Sec. 1.

The first section here shows us Him who is in the purpose of God King in Zion, with whom the destinies of His people are bound up. For "the Redeemer shall come unto Zion, and to them that turn from transgression in Jacob" (Isa. lix. 20): which the apostle paraphrases with "Out of Zion shall come the Deliverer, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob." (Rom. xi. 26.) That is, the king must actually be in Zion for deliverance to come: the kingdom of Christ must be openly established in power upon the earth.

But in the second psalm, while the purpose of God abides unrepentingly, Israel and the earth are not yet ready. The powers of the earth are in coalition against Christ, and among these we find "both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the *people of Israel.*" (Acts iv. 27.) Thus the controversy begins, in the days in which we still are, the long-suffering mercy of God delaying judgment, and the gospel going out among men, while Satan is still the "prince of this world," yea, "the god of this" entire "age." (2 Cor. iv. 4.)

But with the kingdom in this "mystery" form, or what we call the Christian dispensation, the book of Psalms, as part of the Old Testament, has nothing directly to do (Matt. xiii. 10, 11, 35); and in the third psalm and those following, a remnant of Israel is still, as we shall find, before us. All the present period is passed over, and we are in the "end of the age"—the *Jewish* age—concerning which the Lord taught His disciples in the great prophecy on the mount of Olives. (Matt. xxiv.) This we shall see more of presently: just now we have only what reaches down to the rejection of Christ by the Jews.

The first psalm may give us also the King of Israel, not as such but in His personal character, upon which, of course, all depends for blessing. So looked at He is the perfect Israelite, and the psalm speaks in the most general way of the blessedness of an obedience which is naturally linked in them with faith in Christ Himself, which the second emphasizes. Christ also was "Leader and perfecter of faith" in His own Person, but here it is the faith of others in Him; and the two psalms together show us what must be the foundation of blessing for Israel in the last days, the spirit of obedience and faith,—which the apostle connects together in their true relation to one another as the "obedience *of* faith" (Rom. i. 5, Gk.), as necessary to Gentile as to Jew, but in these two psalms applying to the Jew. Herein they proclaim this to be the way of safety and blessing for Israel, though but a remnant,—for every individual soul among them.

PSALM I.

The first psalm has only six verses, which are manifestly divided into two triplets; in the first of these the godly man is seen in the blessedness of being this; in the second, as contrasted with the character and portion of the wicked. Every verse moreover answers to its numerical place. Let us look briefly at this before we take up the psalm more deeply.

First, then, we have the blessedness of the godly looked at by itself. In the first verse we see his *consistent independency* of all the various forms and degrees of ungodliness by which he is encompassed. He shakes them off from him, to walk, as far as their advocates are concerned, alone. Such is in fact the necessary commencement of a true walk with God. The first step with Him must be outside of all that is contrary to Him; and to be indifferent is to be contrary!

PSALMS

BOOK 1. (Ps. i.–xli.)

Christ in the counsel of God the source of all blessing for His people (Israel).

SUBDIVISION 1. (i.–viii.)

Christ ordained King in Zion, and (after rejection by His people) to wider rule as Son of man.

SECTION 1. (i., ii.)

The destined King, and the blessedness of obedience and trust in Him.

1 (1-3): The godly

[1]PSALM I.

The Blessedness of Obedience.

(i.) in his independent steadfastness.

(ii.) in his dependence and communion.

[a]HAPPY the man who [b]walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly,
nor [c]standeth in the way of sinners,
nor [d]sitteth in the seat of scoffers!
But his [e]delight is in the law of Jehovah,
and in his law he [f]meditateth day and night.

[a] Ps. 2. 12. Ps. 32. 1, 2. Ps. 41. 1. Ps. 119. 1, 2 Matt. 5. 3-12.
[b] Prov. 1. 10-15. Prov. 4. 14, 15.
[c] *cf.* Jno. 18. 18.
[d] Jer. 15. 17. Ps. 26. 4.
[e] Ps. 40. 8. Jer. 15. 16. Ps. 119. 162. Job. 23. 12.
[f] Josh. 1. 8. Ps. 119. 97. Col. 3. 16.

In the second verse the godly one is seen in his dependency and communion with God. His delight and meditation are in Jehovah's law, which term, while it may include the whole of the inspired Word existing at the time, yet shows the deep subjection of the soul required and rendered.

In the third verse we have the fruitfulness resulting.

The second part contrasts the wicked with this in character and in end. First, their lightness and barrenness—mere chaff. Secondly, they are separated from the godly by the coming judgment in which it is impossible for them to stand. Thirdly, Jehovah's approbation of the way of the righteous manifests itself thus for them; and the path of the wicked breaks down in ruin.

The thread of numerical structure runs evidently through the psalm, and certifies it to be a good note from the King's treasury. One might trace it, I believe, more fully and minutely; but this may suffice us now. The psalm claims, however, from us more detailed exposition.

The psalm has no special title, as one perhaps not suggested by any special occasion, and its principles being of the widest application. Nor is it needful to speculate as to an author, whom Scripture itself has not made known. As to such things, the higher criticism has set itself to most unnecessary work, and necessarily been led astray by its own wisdom. Faith in the word of God — which, indeed, they will not call it — would have made them approve its silence as well as its speech, and found profit from both. Would it not have rather lessened than enhanced the authority of such words as these, to have them commended to us as from David, or from any other? Conscience alone is needed to respond to them, and will do so with the upright in heart.

The description of the godly man is first negative, then positive. He is first seen in his refusal of any link with the ungodly, whatever be the phase of their ungodliness. The words certainly show us a down-grade of evil, and how its hold strengthens upon those drawn into its vortex. It begins with "counsel," which simply leaves out God. Walk by it, and you shall find that it leads into

(iii.) the fruit realized.

He is even like a [g] tree,
planted by the [h] water-streams,
that giveth its [i] fruit in its season,
and its [j] leaf withereth not:
and all that he doeth he [k] carrieth through.

[g] Ps. 52. 8. Ps. 92. 12–14. *cf.* Jer. 17. 7, 8 with Jno. 15. 4, 5. [h] Is. 44. 3, 4. *cf.* Is. 58. 11 with Jno. 7. 37–39. [i] Hos. 14. 8; Prov. 11. 30; Jno. 15. 8, 16; Gal. 5. 22, 23. [j] *cf.* Ezek. 47. 12; *ctr.* Is. 1. 30. [k] Ps. 90. 17.

the way of sinners,— practical and open rejection of righteousness in deed and word. And this has for its natural consummation the brazen hardness of the scoffer, who says, "Depart from me, for I desire not the knowledge of thy ways!" (Job xxi. 14.) This is the way in which many travel, who strengthen each other by their mutual unbelief, and become for each other the authority which God has lost in their souls. Thus the mass hardens as it compacts together; and this is more and more being seen in days of widespread confederacy such as these are,— confederacy which for the Christian, in its lightest form, means compromise, the overthrow of conscience, of that which is the witness to God's supremacy over man, the divine throne to which alone he is really subject.

The positive side of this description of the godly man is just this subjection of conscience and heart to God. A dependent creature, realizing his relationship to a Being of unchanged perfection, his delight is in conformity to His blessed will, to Jehovah's law. He is exercised by it, occupied with it, meditates upon it day and night. As the psalms themselves even are quoted as "the law" in Scripture (Rom. iii. 19), there is no possible reason for limiting this here even to the books of Moses; and the soul delighting in God will seek to possess itself of all that He has communicated. "*All* Scripture . . . is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness"; so there is nothing unpractical in the whole range of that which God has given to us: if we neglect any of it, this may result in serious misunderstanding of the rest. It is a Jew, of course, who is contemplated here, and with the necessarily limited revelation that had as yet been made; and how much the more does this diligent study upon his part speak to us to whom so much more has been vouchsafed! "Labor not," says the Lord, amid an audience of the hard-working poor, whose poverty and need He so well knew,—"*Labor not* for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give you." And did not these wondrous psalms of praise themselves grow largely out of such day and night study of Jehovah's law as characterizes the godly here?

We are next shown the fruit found and produced by one in such a course: "He is even like a tree, planted by the water-streams, that giveth its fruit in its season." No *special* tree is named; except that it has fruit, we have no further knowledge of it; the vegetable kingdom furnishes the great types of *production*, as the beast is the typical *consumer;* the fruit-tree is the natural figure here.

Like all other living things, the tree is also a growth from seed, the development of an organic unity; and this is what the believer is, himself the fruit of seed of God's sowing, and so far as this goes, at one with himself and with the creation of God *as such;* an *organic* unity, mind, heart, and moral nature, in response to one another.

This, it is true, is not the whole picture of what the believer is, looked at as a man down here, in whom sin dwells, if it does not *reign*. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John i. 7); and yet the same apostle who says this gives us afterwards the picture of one born of God, as fair as this is (iii. 9). It is the truth of what the child of God is, *as that;* it is the *ideal* regenerate man: for God, when He puts such pictures in His gallery, does it to win us to better imitation. He does not, therefore, in this case put the defects before us for such a purpose, or to dispirit us, as if we were given up to a blotched life, but the contrary. He paints what we dare not say, with the Spirit within us, is not possible, and so encourages us on to make it actual. The sin in our lives in no wise comes from the seed of His sowing.

2 (4-6): In contrast with the ungodly.
(i.) in his barrenness.
(ii.) separation between them.

Not so the [l]ungodly,
but like the [m]chaff which the wind driveth away.
Wherefore the ungodly shall not stand in the [n]judgment,
nor sinners in the [o]assembly of the righteous.

l ver. 1. Ps. 9.16, 17.
m Ps. 35. 5. Hos. 13. 3. Is. 17. 13.
n cf. Matt. 25. 31,32,41.
o cf. Ps. 22. 22, 25;

Ps. 35. 18; Ps. 40. 9, 10; Ps. 149. 1.

Some have argued, from what I have called the *idealizing* of the picture, that it must be the king of Israel alone, the Lord Jesus Christ, that is portrayed in it. That He alone has fully answered to it, we may be sure is true; but it is not, therefore, untrue as a generalized type of the believer. Here is the happiness of the man who does so and so; and in doing this he becomes like so and so. So far as the previous conditions are fulfilled, so far is the likeness found to be *like;* there is no difficulty in understanding this.

To return: he is "like a tree planted by the water-streams." Here the figure is of tender care and ministry. The fruit-tree is not a natural growth of the soil: a Hand has planted it, and that amid the divided streams of an irrigated land. The "living water"—and we know this living water—prepares soil for root and root for soil; and not without such care will this dependent life be sustained.

Notice, that it is the man meditating day and night upon Jehovah's law of whom this is said: the Spirit of God acts through the word of God; there is no other way than this. As, to handle the Word without the Spirit is but rationalism, so the dream of the Spirit ministering apart from the Word is delusion and fanaticism. The word of God is the work and gift of the Spirit in man's behalf, and He cannot be expected to set aside the very instrument that He has prepared. It is by "all Scripture, inspired of God," that "the man of God" is to be perfect, "thoroughly furnished unto every good work." Let us take care not to sunder what God has joined thus together.

So nurtured, the result is sure: he "giveth his fruit in its season." There is no crude prematurity about it: truth has to be digested and assimilated; but the activity and energy of life are there, and progress day by day. That which presents itself as of God must needs meet the challenge of the conscience ere the heart is free to yield itself to it, and the life is cast into the mould of the doctrine. But the seasonable fruit is found which God can take pleasure in. It is not for the tree itself that the fruit is produced, and it is not what we find in ourselves that is the point, but what the Lord finds. Even when, with the apostle, "I know nothing by myself,"—am conscious of nothing wrong,—"yet am I not hereby justified, but He that judgeth me is the Lord." (1 Cor. iv. 4.) The soul that is thus able to say nothing for itself is just that in which the Lord will find the fruit He seeks.

And "his leaf shall not wither": it is impossible to forget, as we think of this, that tree upon which once the Lord sought fruit; and finding none, He said, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth for ever," and presently the fig-tree withered away. Thus the leaf withered *because* the fruit was not to be found, for in the case of the fig-tree the putting forth of leaves takes place after the fruit. "The time of figs" in general was, indeed, as we are told, "not yet"; but on this tree, however precociously, there was already the leaf of profession, and the significance of the judgment is therefore apparent.

Not yet was there sign upon earth of subjection to God, save in one nation, to which, therefore, the Lord came. Israel was just as this fig-tree, covered with leaves, zealous of the law, parading their obedience to their "One Jehovah." Surely, then, they would recognize and reverence Him whom Jehovah had openly proclaimed His Son. So the Lord had just, in public fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy, entered the city amid the homage of the multitude, rebuking those who would have rebuked them for it. But He entered to find the temple, His Father's house, made a den of thieves, and to meet the dogged, desperate oppo-

(iii.) Jehovah manifests Himself.

For Jehovah [p] knoweth the way of the righteous,
and the way of the ungodly [q] perisheth.

[p] Ps. 37. 18.
[q] Ps. 146. 9. *cf.* Phil. 3. 18, 19.

sition of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians, all the leaders of the parties that divided the people, united only in refusal of Himself. Thus they had pronounced sentence upon themselves, and His upon the fruitless fig-tree was but the manifestation of their self-assumed position.

How evident the application of this psalm, then, to the real "time of figs" that yet shall be, when the remnant of true believers in Israel shall expand into a nation of rejoicing converts, born as in a day! The fruit being at last found in its season, their "leaf shall *not* wither"; the perpetuity which is in God's favor shall be theirs. "Thy people shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I Jehovah will hasten it in his time." (Isa. lx. 21, 22.)

It is plain, then, that we have Israel before us in this introductory psalm, and in the time of the end; and this is confirmed by the closing verses. It is equally plain that this does not hinder the widest possible application of principles that are ever true, and must abide while God abides. The practical use that all generations have made of the psalms, from the day that they were written, has not been mistaken, except indeed where the necessary differences between Jewish and Christian apprehension and experience have been lost sight of or never appreciated. Upon this there will be need to remark more particularly and frequently enough as we go through the book: we shall not at this time, therefore, dwell upon it.

The second part of the psalm shows the character and doom of the ungodly in contrast with the blessing of the godly. Brief enough is their description, and the image used with regard to them carries us once more onward to the gospels. The Baptist, in his denunciation of judgment to come, draws, as the psalmist does, his similitude from the threshing-floor: "He will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather the wheat into the garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Here the figure is not pursued so far: "they are like chaff which the wind driveth away." The rootless, fruitless vain-doer is shown in the judgment of God in his own nothingness, chased away out of the world, as the wind, from the top of the hills on which the threshing-floors were placed, carried off the useless husk of the grain.

The separation is dwelt on in the next verse, and in plain words, Israel thus becoming what it never yet has been, an "assembly of the righteous." And this once more Isaiah declares will be: "And it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem; when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning." (ch. iv. 3, 4.)

In this Jehovah manifests Himself at last, from under the clouds and darkness which often now are round about Him. That which He approves abides, His seal upon it never will be broken. And thus He "knows" the way of the righteous,—knows it well as what is His own: it is the way in which He too walks, and in which communion is found with Himself. "But the way of the ungodly perisheth."

We have, then, in this introductory psalm the blessedness of a righteous remnant in Israel, cleaving to God in subjection while others wander from Him, and in view of coming judgment which shall leave the whole nation an assembly of the righteous. But this evidently is but a partial view of the matter: the word "faith" has not as yet been uttered; the Object of faith has as yet not been seen. The second psalm must complete, therefore, the picture by presenting these.

Ps. ii.

1 (1-3): the rebellion of the nations.

(i.) its emptiness.

(ii.) their confederacy.

[2]PSALM II.

Christ rejected by the banded nations, but His long-suffering salvation to those that trust in Him.

[r]WHY do the nations rage,
and the races [of men] meditate [s]vainty?
[t]Kings of the earth set themselves,
and rulers take [u]counsel together
against [v]Jehovah and against his [w]anointed:—

r Acts 4. 25-28.
s Ps. 4. 2.
t *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 6. *cf.* Rev. 19. 19.
u *cf.* Rev. 16. 12-16. *cf.* Rev. 17. 12-14.
v *cf.* 1 Sam. 8. 7. *cf.* Ex. 5. 2; Job. 21. 15.
w Ps. 45. 7; Luke 2. 26; Acts 2. 36.

PSALM II.

As already said, even in the first psalm it is Christ who alone perfectly fills out the description. The law, too, was specially to be the study, naturally, of the king of Israel: "it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear Jehovah his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them." (Deut. xvii. 19.) To this, even to the "learning," the Lord was pleased in taking manhood to conform. It is He who speaks thus by the prophet, uniting together in the grace of His humiliation things that seem contrary to one another, the power and wisdom of an almighty Saviour, with the lowly obedience of His creature man: "Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? When I called, was there none to answer? Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? Behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stinketh because there is no water, and dieth for thirst. I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering." This upon the one side; now hear how the same voice goes on: "The Lord Jehovah hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learner." (Isa. l. 2-4.)

Thus He magnified the law, and made it honorable. But though the king of Israel has filled this place, and necessarily in perfection, He is not specifically before us in the first psalm. The second, however, is as explicit as the first is reticent in this respect. In this we find Christ as the God-ordained King, though resisted by the banded power of rebellious nations, and His salvation for those who trust in Him. And thus we find completed the character of the godly ones in Israel, who are, in order to be this, believers also in Christ. The blessedness here, not to be divorced from that of the first psalm, is of all those that take refuge in Him.

The psalm has twelve verses, the number of manifest government, which are divided as twelve is usually,—we may say, almost universally in Scripture, when divided at all,—into *four threes*. The first three show us the rebellion of the nations; the second, Jehovah's opposing attitude and testimony; in the third, Christ is declared to be the Son, with all things in His hand; the fourth is the warning-test for the world, by which the godly are made known. In each of these we find a different speaker.

1. The folly of rebellion is seen at the outset: "who hath hardened himself against Him and prospered?" (Job ix. 4.) So great, indeed, is it, that men have to hide from themselves the truth as to what they do, and the "heart is" indeed "deceitful above all things" that can deceive the man himself with a lie that can deceive no other. It is God who asks "who can know it?" and happy is he who will take God's account. The only reason that can be given for the insanity of rebellion against Him is that "the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed *can be*." (Rom. viii. 7.) Satan is the determined enemy of omnipotence, and knows it. Man can bring himself to disbelieve in God, but "the devils believe and tremble." Yet that has no controlling power to bring to an end an opposition which continually increases the judgment they anticipate. How fearful a thing is the power of sin!

(iii.) the open issue.

2 (4–6): Jehovah's opposition & testimony.

(i.) emptiness of rebellion against the Lord.

(ii.) the overthrow.

(iii.) the establishment of the king.

"Let us [x]break their bands asunder!
and cast their cords from us!"

The [y]sitter in the heavens [z]laugheth;
the Lord derideth them;
Then speaketh he to them in his [a]anger,
and [b]confoundeth them in his wrath.
"And I, I have stablished [c]my king,
upon [d]Zion my holy mount."

x Luke 19. 14. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 3–12.
y Ps. 9. 7. Ps. 99. 1. Is. 40. 22.
z. Ps. 37. 13. Ps. 59. 8. Prov. 1. 26.
a Ps. 76. 7.
b *cf.* Ex. 14. 24.
c *cf.* Is. 11. 1-5; Ps. 45. 1; Ps. 72. 1; *cf.* Matt. 2. 2. d Ps. 50. 2; Is. 2. 2-4; Rev. 14. 1; *ctr.* Eph. 1. 20-23.

The opposition to Jehovah and His Christ is markedly that of the kings and rulers of the earth. The kings desire no "king of kings." They take counsel and confederate together; and Herod and Pontius Pilate of old will have their representatives to the end (fast hastening) of "man's day." That Christ has come on God's part and been rejected and cut off is a fact which remains with all its significance to-day. It is not a thing of the past only, but has stamped its character upon the world. Not till He breaks it in pieces with the rod of iron will the opposition cease; and at no time will it be more open, earnest, and intense than in those last days, when Jewish unbelief and Christian apostasy will culminate in the reception of him who (as our Lord warns the Jews) "comes in his own name," with no manifestation of the Father, and no heaven-sent message, and is received. (John v. 43.)

It was no partial outbreak of human passion that caused the crucifixion. Satan, "the prince of this world," manifested as this by it, was able to unite Jew and Gentile, high and low together, against the One in whom God was reconciling the world unto Himself. Different motives might incite to the deed, and did; but, however the motives differed, the deed was that of all. How rightly could the Lord say of it "Now is the judgment of this world"! It was the final expression of the enmity of man's heart to God: "Now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." (John xv. 24.)

And is the world now other than it then was? The psalm before us shows that its opposition will continue until the rod of iron breaks it down. "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." Even now there is no such thing really as a Christian world. Nay, the most bitter enmity to Christ and Christians has come forth out of the heart of Christendom itself. "I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration."

Thus it remains true still (for "Scripture cannot be broken") that all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. iii. 12.) But when the thin veil of profession, now fast wearing out, shall be finally flung away, who shall attempt to depict the reality, when the very powers that "make the whore desolate and naked" shall with the "beast" to whom they give their strength, "make war with the Lamb"? (Rev. xvii. 12–17.)

The last hours of nearly exhausted patience will be running out, and the lingering judgment at the very doors, when (the saints of the present dispensation having been removed to heaven) the remnant of Israel enter upon the scene, to encounter the full fury of the final storm; and it is with their sufferings and sorrows that the Psalms are filled. The opposition will then be at its height, and it is this crisis which most fully answers to what is here, the nations having thrown off the last semblance of a Christian yoke. It will be then, indeed, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us!" There will be then near in sight the "battle of that great day of God Almighty": "they shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them."

2. The three verses following give us now Jehovah's attitude in view of this hostile gathering. Sitting in the heavens, far above the greatest of their puny efforts, He laughs at their dream of independence and resistance. But presently He too speaks out in His anger, and confounds them in His wrath: "And I,"

3 (7-9): the manifestation of the Son, who is to have all for His possession.
(i.) the decree.
(ii.) all dependent on His word.

I will declare the [e]decree;
Jehovah hath said unto me,
[f]Thou art my Son,
I [g]this day have begotten thee.
[h]Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance,
and for thy possession the ends of the earth.

e *cf.* Ps. 110. 1, 2. *cf.* Ps. 132. 11.
f Heb. 1. 5. Acts 13. 33. Matt. 3. 17. *ctr.* Jno. 1. 14, 18.
g *cf.* Luke 1. 35. *cf.* 2 Sam. 7. 14; *cf.* Ps. 89. 27.
h *cf.* Is. 49. 1-7; Ps. 72. 8-11; *ctr.* Heb. 2. 8, 9 with Phil. 3. 20; Jno. 18. 36.

He says, "I have established my king, upon Zion my holy mount." It was as king of the Jews they wrote His title upon His cross: His claim was His condemnation. The ages have passed, and men might think that the long lapse of time had sufficiently voided *that* title at least; but it is not so. God had even long before declared, as if done, what is as sure as if it were done: "I have established my king on Zion." He calleth the things that are not, as though they were. The might of His voice had brought the worlds into being. The King on Zion is established by the same omnipotent Voice.

3. The King thus ordained comes forward now Himself to announce who He is, and the dominion which is intrusted to Him. As to His Person, He is by nature the true Son of God. The statement by the apostle in his address in the synagogue of Antioch (Acts xiii. 33, 34) has been taken by some to mean that it is in resurrection, as "first-begotten from the *dead*" (Rev. i. 5) that these words apply to Him. But the apostle carefully distinguishes there God's "raising up" to Israel "Jesus as a Saviour," and His raising Him up from the *dead*. To the last he applies the expression, "I will give you the sure mercies of David"; to the former only "Thou art my Son." Had Christ not been already the Son of God in nature, resurrection could not have made Him such; and the angel's words to Mary (Luke i. 35) show distinctly how the title applies: "The Spirit of God shall come upon thee," he says, "and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: *therefore* that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

Thus the Lord's human birth fitly answers to what He was in Deity. In that He was, as John spake of Him, the *only*-begotten Son, with no "brethren," whereas in human nature it is "among many brethren" that He is "First-born." (Rom. viii. 29.) The one title as distinctly excludes any share with others, as the second implies it. Of course it is of His human generation alone that it could be said, "*To-day* have I begotten Thee"; and thus He is Son of David also, and King in Zion.

As such, however, the nations, even to "the ends of the earth," are under His dominion; and He has but to ask to have. *When* He asks,—the nations being in rebellion,—He must subdue the opposition with "the rod of His strength" (Ps. cx. 2), which the psalm before us shows us to be yet a *shepherd's* rod. The uniform translation of the words in the New Testament (Rev. ii. 27; xii. 5; xix. 15, *Gk.*) proves that the true rendering here is "thou shalt *shepherd* them," not "break," which the parallelism in the latter part of the verse has commended to many. But a *shepherd's* rod can smite, and with severity, just because there is heart behind it,—in care of the flock; and we are reminded of Moses, when that rod of his, which had been turned into a serpent, returned to his hand. Forty years he had been in training as a shepherd when he was sent, with that sign of the power entrusted to him, to be the deliverer of Israel, and that rod smote Egypt, so that the nations trembled. Here now is the antitypical Moses, far greater, yet only the more the true "Shepherd of Israel," who appears for the redemption of His people, and to whose hands is committed therefore the judgment of the world.

But how different is the realization of His inheritance here from that quiet overspreading of the earth by the gospel which so many still imagine! But "as

(iii.) the realization of the possession.

4 (10–12): the warning-test for the world.

(i.) wisdom for kings.

(ii.) a message of humiliation.

(iii.) the sanctuary-refuge.

Thou shalt [i]shepherd them with an iron rod;
as a potter's vessel thou shalt [j]shatter them.

And now, be [k]wise, ye kings!
be admonished, ye judges of earth!
Serve Jehovah with [l]fear,
and rejoice with trembling.
[m]Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and ye perish from the way,
for in a [n]little will his anger kindle!
[o]Happy all they that take refuge in him.

i Rev. 12. 5. Rev. 19. 14–16. *cf.* Rev. 2. 27 with 2 Tim. 2. 12. Ps. 149. 6–9.
j cf. Luke 20. 18. Dan. 2. 34, 35, 44. 2 Thess. 1. 8.
k cf. Ps. 18. 44.
l Heb. 12. 28, 29. Ps. 33. 8. Jer. 8. 6, 7.
m cf. Gen. 41. 40; *cf.* 1 Ki. 19. 18. *n* Hag. 2. 6; Heb. 10. 37. *o* Ps. 1. 1; Jer. 17. 7, 8.

concerning the gospel, they are *enemies* for your sakes" (Rom. xi. 28), is said of Israel now, and with Israel's blessing that of the world is bound up. The prophet Zechariah has shown us very clearly how in the midst of Jerusalem's extreme distress, compassed with enemies and just falling into their hands, "then the Lord shall go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. . . . And His feet shall stand in that day on the mount of Olives," —how familiar a spot! . . . "and Jehovah my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." (ch. xiv. 3–5.) The blessing flows out consequent upon this, and "one Lord" is owned throughout the whole earth; but again (though in how different a manner from the cross!) it is from the rock smitten that the waters flow out: the judgment of the world is that in which men learn the righteousness of God, and to submit themselves to it.

4. All therefore depends upon His will and word. If He asks, all things are put in His hand, and His enemies are made His footstool. But He has *not* asked, and the time is that of His "kingdom and *patience*." He reigns, but on His Father's throne, not yet His own (Rev. iii. 21),—His *human* throne. His saints, therefore, as yet cannot reign with Him, but suffer; and this will be true for Jewish saints even after those of the present period are caught up to meet Him. For as to the earth it cannot yet be said that He has taken His great power and reigned, or that "the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ"; and, as we have seen, the sorest time of distress for saints in Israel will be just before the time when He shall appear.

Still, therefore, the warning word goes out to the kings of the earth: wisdom for them will be to submit themselves to Jehovah before the stroke comes that shall effectually humble them,—too late for blessing to them then! Well may those even who do this "rejoice with trembling" for the great peril to which they have been so near. Let them give the Son* at last the homage-kiss of peace and reconciliation now when the slumbering wrath, slumbering so long, is just about to burst out in a blaze that shall sweep all that is exposed to it to destruction.

One sanctuary refuge is there only. None *from* Him; nowhere but *in* Him. Happy all they who take refuge there!

Thus the two psalms before us are complementary to one another, and together a suited introduction to the rest of the book. In the two, the Old and New Tes-

* The word in the last verse for "Son" is not the same as that in verse 7, and is claimed as Aramaic, and not pure Hebrew. Exception has been taken to it on this score, and many commentators, following most of the ancient versions, read instead of "kiss the Son," "worship purely," "yield to duty," etc., or give wholly conjectural emendations of the text. Cheyne now accepts the "brilliant conjecture" of Lagarde, "Put on [again] his bonds," making a parallel with verse 3. Delitzsch observes that the clearness of the passage "seems to have blinded the translators." No doubt in many cases it is the great offense. *Bar*, Delitzsch observes, "has nothing strange about it when found in solemn discourse, and helps one over the dissonance of *ben pen*."

The context makes "kiss the Son" the only fitting rendering This is, as is plain, the controversy of which the psalm speaks, and it would be unnatural for the warning not to contemplate this.

taments, as it were, join hands,—the double testimony of God is given. After the warning of their long captivity for disobedience to the law, Moses leaves Israel with the assurance, "when thou shalt return unto Jehovah thy God, and shalt hearken to His voice according to all that I command thee this day,—thou and thy sons, with all thy heart and with all thy soul, that then Jehovah thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion on thee, and will gather thee again from among all the peoples whither Jehovah thy God hath scattered thee." But that has respect only to one controversy; there is now another, and a far more serious one; and this is what the second psalm brings out: thus they are both needful, and exactly in place. Whoever the writers may be, whoever it may be that has arranged and given them their place in the collection, there has been *somewhere* the most perfect intelligence as to Israel's condition in times which must have been yet future. Neither as to the psalms nor to their position is there anything haphazard or out of harmony. Order rules in every part; every verse even is in place: the fitness being doubtless little known even to those who were used of God to write and arrange them, and such as even Christians themselves have been slow to appreciate. Whose is this wisdom? And if this be inspiration, what kind of inspiration is it? Most certainly the patchwork of the higher criticism it is not; and probably the more we ponder it, if there be a spirit of reverence in our hearts, the less we shall hesitate to call it "verbal."

Sec. 2.

Five psalms follow, which give us, according to the meaning of the number, the exercises of the faithful remnant in Israel, while yet the day of Christ's rejection lasts, although the end, as we have already seen, is contemplated as nigh. Indeed, for there to be a Jewish remnant, with Jewish hopes and expectations, owned as such, *after* Christ's rejection, means that the present dispensation is over, that the heirs of heavenly blessings are removed to heaven, and that that "end of the age" (not world) is nearly reached, which the disciples in their question on Olivet (Matt. xxiv. 3) connect, as the after-prophecy does, with the personal appearing of the Lord in glory. It is certain they could not be thinking of a *Christian* "age": of Christianity itself, and a long delay of the Bridegroom, they knew nothing. It is clear also that we find in the prophecy following a people implied of whom they themselves could be, and were in fact taken as, representatives. For them there would be a recognized "holy place," the danger of being led away by a false Messiah appearing in the midst of Israel, a Jewish sabbatic law, and all this in the land of Judea, and in days, as already said, quite near the end to be brought by the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven.

This nearness may be very definitely proved: for the abomination in the holy place begins a time of trouble for these disciples of His (who must be that, as ready to obey His word) unexampled at any time before or since. It is to be as brief as it is severe: except those days were shortened, no flesh should be saved; but for His elect's sake whom He has chosen He has shortened the days. Here, then, is but a short period; immediately after which the sun is darkened, and then the sign of the Son of man appears, and they "see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

Thus, as clearly as possible, we have depicted here a Jewish remnant in the last days,—Jewish in all their connections and prospects, and yet disciples of the Lord as well. The reference to Daniel which we find here still further defines the period, and shows us this as itself (to speak broadly) "the end of the age,"—the broken-off last "week" of the seventy announced to him; but all this will come before us necessarily, as we go through the psalms, and need not be dwelt on now.

The five psalms before us give us then the exercises of such a remnant; as still introductory to the book as a whole, they outline moreover these in general, with reference to the end to which they lead, and for which indeed they are per-

mitted. It is plain enough, from many scriptures, what the end is of all their trials. God's double controversy with the nation is upon them. The broken law has its claim on the one side; their rejected Messiah faces them on the other. When the light begins to rise on Israel, the darkness of an awful eclipse has fallen upon the rest of the world. Christ has gathered all that are truly His in Christendom to Himself. Nothing remains but a rejected mass,—corrupt, and rapidly hastening to apostasy. Israel are in unbelief, and ready, in their refusal of the true Messiah, to receive a false one soon to rise. The conflict of good with evil might seem to have come to an end, and the strife now beginning to be only of the different forms of evil with one another. Without other restraint than that of these collisions, the waves of a new deluge are abroad upon the earth; and yet over this "raging deep," and, in fact, for a new creation, the Spirit of God begins to brood once more.

The five psalms here give us this work of the Spirit in a remnant of Israel, gradually separated by it from the apostatizing mass, at whose hands they suffer increasing persecution until, after God's end is reached for them, the coming of the Lord brings deliverance. The trials through which they pass are used to bring them to the knowledge of themselves, and thus to the apprehension of the mercy of which they have found the need; and this is what we find developed here: not fully, indeed, but sufficiently to serve as the introduction which it is. The eighth psalm, which is of course beyond this series, shows the end reached which we have in the prophecy in Matthew also, the Son of man, deliverer from "the enemy and the revengeful," and set over all the works of God's hands. This finishes the brief introduction, which enables the larger details, worked out afterwards in various ways, to be assigned to their place. For, while the introduction is as to its order historical, the body of the book has a doctrinal basis, the experiences everywhere being connected with the great truths which faith embraces, and by which spiritual life is shaped and sustained.

The Psalms, like all other Scripture, have thus their perfect order and relation to one another, the want of apprehension of which deprives them of definite individuality also, and thus of very much of their power for edification and blessing for our souls. The "higher criticism" would classify them, indeed, but according to theories of authorship and times of composition, for which they have little but conjecture, and that outside of Scripture itself. The meaning given them in this way generally, as we might expect, is of the earth earthy, and lowers their whole character. The application for which we find the warrant in Scripture itself reveals their inspiration, while maintaining them at their highest spiritual value, and justifying their widest use and extension to the needs of practical life. Were it not for this, one could indeed well understand the question, and be prepared both for surprise and incredulity in the asking why the Spirit of Christ in the Psalms should link itself thus with the feeble remnant of a yet future day, in this close and peculiar manner? Certainly the unbelief would be not only natural but justifiable, if it were implied at all that, in the link with these, the intervening generations of God's saints had been forgotten. Their own hearts are, and have been in all time, witness that this is not so. Nay, in the wonderful wisdom and goodness of God, this link with a latter-day remnant of His people is made in a very simple and intelligible way, to minister only the *more* effectually for being this, to the comfort and blessing of every generation.

A people are taken up at the lowest ebb of hope, into whose cup of sorrow every bitter ingredient is crowded. All the foundations of the earth are out of course. God's four sore plagues are there (Ez. 14. 21); death in all that makes death terrible; the enemy without, intestine strife within; seduction, and open-handed violence; the wrath of man, the dread of divine wrath; the consciousness of sin aggravated and accumulated: a time of trouble such as never was and never again will be. Surely the hearts that bear this burden have need of special comfort, and from God; while that which *can* be comfort in the bitterest hour of human trial will

SECTION 2. (iii.-vii.)

The education of faith in a day of rejection and conflict.

Ps. iii.

[1]PSALM III.

The sufficiency of the unchanging God.

A psalm of David when he [p] fled from the face of Absalom his son.

1 (1-4): Known sufficiency.

(i.) power of the enemies.

JEHOVAH, how are they [q]multiplied that straiten me!
many are rising up against me!

(ii.) whose words cut off from salvation.

Many are [r]saying of my soul,
There is no salvation for him in God. Selah.

[p] 2 Sam. 15. 14, 30.
[q] 2 Sa. 15. 12. *cf.* Ps. 118. 10-12.
[r] *cf.* 2 Sam. 16. 8. Ps. 71. 7, 11.

be comfort at least equally in any other. Hence the peculiar provision for those in such peculiar need is no less gracious consideration of all lesser need. He who stoops to have mercy on the *chief* of sinners is not thereby refusing but extending mercy to all grades of such. And He who stoops, as here, to the need of the neediest, is showing heart and resources equal to the need of the less needy.

Looked at in this way, the book of Psalms gets its full character, and the widest possible application to saints everywhere and at all times. While the actual predicted deliverance for those in that unequalled tribulation lies so near at hand, is so mighty, so complete, so altogether of God, that the prophetic anticipations of it which support the faith of the remnant of that day, furnish for the day of trial everywhere those strong and blessed expressions of hope and confidence which faith in all ages has laid hold of as God-sent for its need, and found no delusion. For what are all mornings but the anticipation of that final one whose brightness shall never fade? Or what is the light of that unclouded day but just the full manifestation of that love which, not then beginning, but spanning, as it does, eternity, is as true for faith now as it will be for sight by and by?

But another thing with regard to that day, so brief and yet so often the theme of prophecy: its transience cannot be thus the true measure of its importance; no *time*-measure can be of human history. The Cross is the glory and wonder of eternity, but how short the time of its continuance! And in this last hour of "man's day," before the day of the Lord has abased all the pride of the creature in the presence of God,—the time of the harvest, when every seed upon earth is permitted to bring forth, that it may manifest itself for what it is,—when the bridle upon evil is removed, and it is allowed to gather all its forces for the final conflict,—what interest for us all attaches to the questions which then reach their final solution,—to the forms of evil which will then receive judgment from the Lord Himself!

What various exercises, then, may we not expect to meet with in the Psalms! And what need shall we have of patient discrimination in seeking to realize the features of a time such as that presented to us! May our God give wisdom; and may we find abundant blessing from the study of this precious book!

PSALM III.

The third psalm is, in its title, ascribed to David, when he fled from the face of Absalom his son. "Search the story of David's life from end to end," says Cheyne, "and you will find no situation which corresponds to these psalms" (III. and IV.). On the other hand, Delitzsch says "All the leading features of the psalm accord with [the inscription], namely, the mockery of one who is rejected of God (2 Sam. xvi. 7, seq.); the danger by night (2 Sam. xvii. 1); the multitudes of the people (xv. 13, xvii. 11); and the high position of honor held by the psalmist."

1. The psalm itself is simple enough in character. It is the first and most

(iii.) but Jehovah Himself about me.
(iv.) the test of experience.
2 (5-8): Help which is salvation.
(i.) peace in truth.
(ii.) and in presence of enemies.

But, thou, Jehovah, art a [s]shield about me;
my [t]glory and the [u]uplifter of my head!
I [v]cry unto Jehovah with my voice,
and he answereth me from his [w]holy mount. Selah.

I [x]laid me down and slept;
I awaked,—for Jehovah sustaineth me.
I will [y]not be afraid of myriads of the people
that have set themselves against me round about.

[s] Prov. 30. 5.
[t] Ps. 62. 7.
[u] Ps. 27. 6.
[v] Ps. 34. 6.
[w] Ps. 2. 6.
[x] Ps. 4. 8. *cf.* Mark 4. 37-39.
[y] Ps. 27. 1-3. Is. 12. 2.

elementary thing in a believer, what indeed makes him such, that is expressed in it,—confidence in the Unchangeable. Here is the soul's sufficiency, and the growing danger has no argument to shake it. As the waves rise, the soul is only driven up higher upon its rock of refuge.

Yet around they murmur, "there is no help for him in God." The many that rightly see God in the circumstances, often wrongly judge of Him by the circumstances alone. There is an easy faith, which was that of Job's friends, that simply accepts the clouds and darkness that are "*round about* Him," as if they *revealed* instead of *hiding* Him. It is a straightforward theology, to which the sufferer himself is often tempted to become a proselyte, that love with Him wears no disguises; whereas it is indeed His delight to find a soul familiar enough with Him to *penetrate* the disguise, and mount through the darkness to the perfect Light above.

With this shield of faith the psalmist fortifies himself. Nay, better than that, it is God who is his shield; no partial defense, therefore, but "round about" him: perhaps he had not realized Him so near, had not the need been so great. Thus, though the cloud be a reality too, he can say of Him, "my glory," as in the cloud itself for Israel, and in the darkness, the glory had shone out. So he can add, "the Uplifter of my head": for it is not pride or obstinacy that will not give in, or natural courage merely that sustains him, but the sweet apprehension of the "I AM" of God. "*I am* has sent me to you," was the deliverer of old to say; and with the divine words, when faith admits them into the heart, deliverance might seem already to have come.

At the back of this confidence lie how many experiences! what answers to prayer have already come! how well the present faith is justified by the test of experience! This living intercourse has made familiar to us a living God; nor is He man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent. I cry, and He answers me! and this is not a possible delusion. The Voice out of the *holy* mount, the *holy* Voice that speaks ever from the more wondrous sanctuary of the divine nature, how impossible for it to have been but the mere feeble echo of my own!

2. The psalm passes on from the general to the particular,—to the present distress and the needful deliverance. Here already there has been obtained a foretaste of this, in the peace that has entered and possessed the soul. "I have laid me down and slept," he says; not evidently the sleep of one merely worn out, to whom it has become a necessity: men have been known to sleep on the deck of a ship in action; but not such the sleep that is spoken of here. It is the peace of the known rampart round about which qualifies for this. Night has its special dangers in the midst of warfare, and the imagination pictures in the darkness more than may be found; yet faith can rest and be quiet under the watchful eye of God, and the morning justifies this assurance: "I awaked, for Jehovah sustaineth me."

The multitude of enemies are then but witnesses of Jehovah's care of one that trusts in Him. They remain, but faith has already triumphed over them. The cry to God for deliverance is answered in the soul by memories of the past that are at the same time prophetic of the future. The enemies are the same "ungodly" who have been so often before defeated, and gape upon him with jaws that have, as it were, been already broken. They are harmless, and only

(iii.) a prophetic memory.

Arise, Jehovah! save me, O my God!
for thou hast [z]smitten all mine enemies upon the jaw,
thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.

(iv.) the lesson of experience.

[a]Salvation belongeth to Jehovah;
thy [b]blessing is on thy people. Selah.

[z] *cf.* 2 Ki. 19. 35–37.

[a] Jonah 2. 9. Ex. 14. 13.
[b] Ps. 67. 1. Ps. 115. 13–15.

[2]PSALM IV.

Confidence in Jehovah's distinguishing care.

Ps. iv. 1 (1–3): The Righteous for the righteous. (i.) a cry to the God of righteousness.

For the [c]chief musician; on [d]stringed instruments. A psalm of David.

[e]ANSWER me when I call, O God of my [f]righteousness!
Thou [who] in straitness [g]didst make room for me,
be gracious to me, and hear my prayer!

[c] *cf.* Ps. 6. 54. 55. 61. 67. 76. Titles. Hab. 3. 19.
[d] *ctr.* Ps. 5, Title.
[e] Ps. 27. 7.
[f] Ps. 7. 8. Ps. 35. 24.
[g] Ps. 63. 7.

make indeed Jehovah better known. To Him belongs salvation; upon His people invariably His blessing rests.

All this is simplicity itself, as long as no questions arise from within to disturb the conclusion. God is the same, and from *without* no question need be for a moment entertained. Beautiful as this faith is, and real, and fully warranted, and sure to be fully justified at last; yet as we follow these psalms to their close, we shall find how many painful experiences may intervene before this childhood instinct becomes maturity of manhood knowledge,—before "I will not be afraid" becomes the abiding realization of the soul. It will become so, for this is true and Spirit-taught confidence, and God cannot be less to it than faith deems of Him. But it is another thing whether faith will be equal to the encounter of all challenges itself has made. This process in some way do we not all pass through? Yet through fire and water we are brought at last into a wealthy place. Such is God's way; and His way is ever perfect. He must needs have His people answer to what His heart craves that they should be. Hence come their trials, and His issue both.

Psalm IV.

We have for the first time here a musical inscription, "To the Chief Musician; on stringed instruments," as psaltery and harp. A gentler, quieter strain is indicated than in the psalm that follows, with its accompaniment of flutes. The themes certainly correspond to this difference, though we may not be able to define it more closely. And who is meant by "the chief musician"? Is it indeed a note of relation to Him who has led in these experiences, "the Leader and Finisher of faith," as Scripture declares Him, and who at the end, "in the midst of the congregation," leads the praises of His people with the gladdest heart among them all? It is surely natural to think so, even though we can give no account why this is found in some of these psalms and not in others. The spiritual sense has had perhaps too little training with us for this.

The psalm corresponds perfectly with its place as *second* in this series, being so far like the second psalm itself, a contrasted picture of the righteous and the wicked. God has set apart the godly for Himself, and the effects of this are seen, not in outward deliverances, but in the joy of an inward experience beyond telling: the first pleads with the sons of men to make proof of it for themselves. This is an advance evidently upon the last psalm, while it leads on to new ground which by and by may give room for question and experiences of another kind. At present all is confidence.

1. The psalm has two main divisions; the first giving the theme, the second the confirmation of the doctrine of the first. The first declares the righteous One to be for the righteous. The key-note here is righteousness. The "God of my righteousness" is the God to whom all my righteousness has respect, as it *must* have, to *be* righteousness. God apprehended by the soul is alone the basis of all

(ii.) human contradiction.
(iii.) the godly set apart for Jehovah.

O [h]sons of men, how long shall my glory be for shame?
will ye love [i]emptiness, seek after a lie? Selah.
But know that Jehovah [j]hath set apart the godly for himself:
Jehovah will [k]hear when I call to him.

2 (4-8): Confirmation on either side.
(i.) of personal sincerity.

[l]Tremble and sin not;
speak with your own [m]heart upon your bed, and be still!
Offer the [n]sacrifices of righteousness,
and put your [o]trust in Jehovah.

(ii.) the invitation to faith.

ctr. Is. 1. 11-17; *cf.* Ps. 40. 6-10.

h *cf.* Gen. 6. 2. Ps. 31. 19. Ps. 57. 4.
i *cf.* Ps. 2. 1. Ps. 5. 6. Is. 29. 8.
j Ps. 31. 20. Ps. 83. 3.
k Ps. 34. 4-6.
l Ps. 99. 1. Is. 32. 11. Joel 2. 1
m Ps. 39. 2-4. Ps. 45. 1. Ps. 63. 5, 6.
n Ps. 51. 17, 19;
o Ps. 9. 10; Ps. 37. 3.

right, and ensures it. Apart from this, all virtues are but ciphers, which with a preceding figure only become valuable. Men are themselves, apart from God, such ciphers, and what is duty to them, if He is not regarded in it?

This God of righteousness is a living God, actively interposing in behalf of His own, the godly ones, whom He distinguishes as such. When they call, He hears. Faith is exercised, but answered, and strengthened by the exercise. In the consciousness of this experience of the divine favor, the psalmist turns to plead with the sons of men, who, while ignorant of this, are yet not ignorant of an opposite experience in the paths that they have chosen. He can appeal to them as even consciously loving vanity, and seeking after a lie,—after that which never fulfills the promise that it gives. Surely this is knowledge enough to prevent men mocking at and insulting the believer's glory, which is founded upon experiences of which *they* can know nothing.

2. The second part of the psalm confirms this on both sides with facts of experience. He bids them only to shut out the vain thoughts that allure them, to retire into themselves, and consult only their own hearts upon their bed in the night. Pursuit of *pleasure* only manifests that there is not the enjoyment of *happiness*. It may kill time and keep from reflection; whereas, did they reflect, they would find that the weariness and emptiness experienced were but the necessary fruit of departing from God, of sin which had ruined all. This secret their own hearts held, and would reveal, if they would only take them for their counsellors. Conscience would then convince them of the reality of sin which no forms of ritual service could ever meet: they must offer the sacrifices of *righteousness*, and put their trust in Jehovah,—two things which are very much the lesson of the first two psalms.

The language seems to intimate that while practical ungodliness abounds in Israel, and the righteous are the subjects of reproach and persecution, the apostasy of the mass is not yet consummated,—the "sinners" are not yet full-length "scoffers." The forms of Judaism are yet going on; there are sacrifices, but not "sacrifices of righteousness," nor conjoined with any practical faith in Jehovah. The next step may be into open apostasy; but it is not yet taken.

Thus there is still room for the appeal in the psalm. There is hope that they may be yet touched with the need of a condition in which the wearying question of good that is not found ends surely in the discovery of the vanity of what they have set their hearts upon,—a need which no increase of corn and wine can meet. On the other hand, God is the satisfying portion of His people; not merely a "shield about" one, but a "light," a glory within the soul, true gladness, not the product of the soul itself, nor of man's labor. Yet this gladness how impossible for a soul out of God's presence to imagine! Men have dropped so far away from God as to have lost even the sense of good in Him to be sought after or enjoyed. God's salvation is only for them the sad alternative of hell; God's presence, alas, almost hell itself! So the appeal to the sons of men turns perforce into a prayer: "Lord, lift up the light of Thy countenance upon us"—the light in which alone we see light. "Thou hast put gladness into my heart more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased."

(iii.) realized blessedness in the light of God's face.
(iv.) the test of experience.
(v.) the recompense in the divine ways.

[p] Many are saying, Who will show us good?
Lift up on us the [q] light of thy face, Jehovah!
Thou hast put [r] gladness in my heart
[s] more than in the time when their corn and their fresh wine increased.
I will both lay me down in [t] peace and sleep,
for thou alone, Jehovah, makest me dwell secure.

p Ps. 3. 2. *cf.* Eccl. 1. 12–18.
q Num. 6. 26. Ps. 16. 11. Ps. 89. 15. *cf.* 2 Cor. 3. 18.
r Ps. 43. 4. Ps. 30. 11, 12. Ps. 97. 11, 12.
s *cf.* Lev. 23. 39, 40.
t Ps. 3. 5; Prov. 3. 24–26; Jer. 31. 25, 26.

For us, blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, accepted in the Beloved, known to and knowing God in Him, that light has indeed fully shone. Children of the day, no more of night, nor of darkness, "God has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." We are His living witnesses that in His presence is fullness of joy. And this joy is power for walk, for holiness, for service, as nought else is. The joy of the Lord is your strength. How well may we enjoy a possession secured to us as is ours, without one disturbing care! "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep."

This psalm, then, is in evident advance of the previous one, as has been said. There it is God a shield; here it is God a portion. There what He does for me; here what He is to me. Yet we may easily perceive how the ground taken here may permit an after-question in the soul. "Jehovah has set apart the *godly* for Himself." If that be the root of confidence, will it always be held so certain that "Jehovah will hear when *I* call upon Him"? At present there may be no doubt, and rightly none; yet will it be as plain through the cloudy and dark day as in the sunshine now? Who that has known what it is to be upon this ground but has felt its instability? When the storm brings up the depths of the heart, will all that is brought up be "godliness"?

Yet the principle is true, quite true. Grace does not set aside righteousness, but confirms and reigns through it. But for this grace must be known as that which secures all; and ere this be apprehended some bitter experience may yet be gone through. Bitter assuredly will theirs be whom these psalms prophetically contemplate; yet shall they return, after all the questioning is over, with only fuller assurance to the blessed reality that the light of His countenance, with all the gladness that it pours into the soul, is theirs forever.

Psalm V.

The fifth psalm is, in many respects, the converse, and in some the opposite of the fourth. He who has set apart the godly for Himself, of necessity "hateth all the workers of iniquity." And here, for the first time, the pleading is *against*, and no longer *with*, them. It is one of those psalms whose language most Christians have found difficulty in appropriating as their own. No wonder that they should not be able to assimilate "Destroy thou them, O God," with their Lord's "Father, forgive them," or with Stephen's "Lay not this sin to their charge"! Judaism and Christianity are, in this matter, essentially different; and however people may try to blend them together, their own consciences will bear witness against the attempt. Alas, that the law which says "eye for eye and tooth for tooth" should be brought back to contravene the contrasted words of the Master, "But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: . . . love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for those that despitefully use you and persecute you."

But the question will be asked, why should that be right and according to God upon the lips of a Jew, which would be wrong and to be condemned upon the lips of a Christian? The answer is, first, the prayer, "Destroy thou them, O God; for they have rebelled against thee," is not wrong as measured by the test of intrinsic morality. If it be right for God to destroy, as it surely is, it is not wrong *in itself* to ask Him to do so. Nay, this is here a Spirit-taught prayer, and answered of God, as the Lord says: "And shall not God avenge His own elect who cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will

Ps. v.

[3]PSALM V.

The holiness of God's presence.

To the chief musician; upon the [u]flutes. A psalm of David.

1 (1-3): A cry to God the King.
(i.) Jehovah!
(ii.) thy suppliant.
(iii.) with words ordered as before Thee.

GIVE ear to my words, Jehovah!
consider my [v]meditation.
Attend to the voice of my [w]cry, my [x]king and my God!
for unto thee do I pray.
Jehovah, in the [y]morning shalt thou hear my voice;
in the morning will I order [my prayer] unto thee,
and [z]watch.

u cf. Ps. 4. Title. 1 Chron. 23. 5.
v Ps. 39. 3.
w Ps. 4. 1.
x cf. Ps. 2. 6. *cf.* Ps. 20. 9.
y Ps. 4. 8.
z cf. 1 Pet. 4. 7. *cf.* Col. 4. 2.

avenge them speedily." (Luke xviii. 7, 8.) So, when Elijah asked for fire from heaven to consume those that were sent to take him, *the fire came.* God put His seal upon that prayer, terrible as it was. Yet, when the disciples asked, in the case of the Samaritans, "Lord, shall we call down fire from heaven to consume them, even as Elias did?" they met with rebuke, not sanction: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." But why should that which was right in Elias be wrong in them? On this account: "for the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

In other words, they were out of sympathy with the mind of God. When Christ had come to save, how altogether unsuited a prayer for judgment! The Lord does not speak of any comparative difference between the Samaritans and the Israelitish companies of old, but reminds them that *God was showing grace.* How strange and sad that they should not enter more into the spirit of what He was doing, and rejoice in this grace being shown to men. On the other hand, were the day of grace passed, and the time come for judgment to take its course upon the despisers of that grace, what more evident than that the invoking of judgment would be the only right thing, and the prayer for grace itself totally unsuited?

Thus, when the Rider on the white horse comes out to smite the nations, the very saints now praying for God's mercy upon men will come out after Him as the "armies in heaven" to the judgment of the earth, and there is not, and could not be, a solitary cry of intercession.

If Christians, then, are with Christ in the mercy that is now being shown, they will find it difficult indeed to pray, "Destroy thou them, O God"; but when judgment is at the doors, and the foredoomed followers of the beast and of his prophet are arrayed in open, blasphemous opposition to the Most High, the King of kings and Lord of lords, the prayer of the Jewish remnant of that future day will be in accordance with God's mind, "Cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions, for they have rebelled against Thee."

These considerations may account also for the change of tone in the fifth psalm as compared with the fourth. *There* there was, as we have seen, an appeal to the sons of men to consider. Here that is over, and they are treated as having definitely taken their place in rebellion against Jehovah. Entreaty lasted while it might avail. That being found in vain, judgment takes its course. The very purposes of love and goodness, against which the evil is arrayed in opposition, call for the unsparing removal of what hinders the display of that goodness. The "Lamb" will thus be the "Lion." (Rev. v.) The Great Shepherd will "shepherd with an iron rod." Love will smite, and yet be love: yea, because it is.

The Psalm therefore has the governmental character, and the twelve verses which speak of this; in general, also, the 4 x 3 structure which 12 ordinarily has. Yet there is a difference, the third section being divided again, so that the psalm has five divisions instead of four: all which must be in harmony with the theme.

2 (4-6): On the ground of His hatred of evil.
(i.) a God wholly self-consistent.
(ii.) a hater of boasting.
(iii.) the full issue.

For no Mighty One that hast [a]pleasure in wickedness art thou:
evil cannot sojourn with thee.
[b]Boasters shall not take a stand before thine eyes;
thou [c]hatest all workers of vanity.
Thou [d]destroyest the actors of a lie:
the man of bloodshed and deceit Jehovah abhorreth.

[a] Hab. 1.13.
[b] Ps. 1. 5.
[c] *cf.* Ps. 139. 21, 22.
[d] *cf.* Rev. 21. 8. *ctr.* Is. 63.8.

3 (7): Personal assurance of the true worshiper.

But I, in the abundance of thy [e]mercy, will come unto thy house:
I will worship [f]toward the temple of thy holiness in thy fear.

[e] Ps. 51. 1.
[f] *cf.* Dan. 6. 10. 1 Ki. 8. 44, 48. Jonah 2. 4. *ctr.* Heb. 10. 19.

In fact, though showing governmental numbers the psalm is not in the governmental place: it is a psalm of the sanctuary; and its subject, therefore, is the *holiness* of God, which indeed necessitates the judgment of evil, but the main bearing of it is upon the education of the remnant themselves, as suits the place it has in this series; and this we must go on to consider.

1. The first part is a cry to God the King: the power of evil manifesting itself continually more, the heart rises above it for relief to the divine supremacy. God has not yielded to man the sceptre of His omnipotence. It is Jehovah the Unchangeable on whom he relies as hearkening to his words, and invites to consider even the heart-musing from which they spring. How man, the creature of a moment, sinks into nothing here, in presence of the Eternal!

Yet in this very contrast faith finds its claim upon God. The appeal of our weakness to His strength, of our ignorance to His wisdom, of our sinfulness to His grace, can never be in vain. To those that wait upon the Lord as such, how many are the promises! And here, "if patience has its perfect work," we are "perfect and entire, lacking nothing." (James i. 4.) Thus the plea is here only that of dependence—"I am Thy suppliant"; and there is no sense of its inadequacy: man taking his place before God,—God, too, has His, and relationship is owned between them.

But God being such as He is, the prayer of the suppliant has respect necessarily to His character; the words become "ordered" words, as in His presence: there is earnestness, and expectancy of the mercy sought.

2. In the second part, His nature as against evil is dwelt upon. He is not like one of the mighty ones of the nations, in whom power is conjoined with pleasure in wickedness: not for the briefest moment can evil dwell with Him; even the boaster, with his pretension to more than what is true, cannot maintain himself before the searching eyes of omniscience; and the doers of what is unprofitable and vain He hates. In the issue the actors of a lie perish, and the violence with which men associate their deceit is shown as the abhorrence of the righteous Judge.

3. The third section, or what would have been that in the ordinary division of the number 12, is here divided, as already said, so that only the first verse remains to it; the two others being detached as a plain fourth section. In this one verse the personal assurance of the worshiper expresses itself; but briefly, and without the joyousness that has marked the previous psalms when God's revelation of Himself to the soul has been the theme; and this seems a sign of transition to the psalm that follows. The sense of the divine holiness induces fear of the Holy One, and it is abundant mercy to be permitted to come unto God's house. He worships "toward" it. A certain shadow seems to pass over the soul, rather than the "thanksgiving" being heard, which we have elsewhere "at the remembrance of His holiness." And this agrees well with the abrupt shortening of the section already noticed, if it be not rather the explanation of it. And how, indeed, shall we have "boldness to enter into the holiest," or to draw

4 (8, 9): Prayer for a right walk under the eyes of the wicked. (i.) for guidance in righteousness. (ii.) "the contradiction of sinners."

5 (10–12): A prayer for the judgment that shall deliver the righteous. (i.) a righteous end. (ii.) the deliverance. (iii.) Jehovah manifested in it.

Jehovah, [g]lead me in thy righteousness because of those that watch me:
make thy way straight before my face.
For in their mouth is nothing [h]certain:
their inward part yawning depths,
their [i]throat an open sepulchre,
[while] they make [j]smooth their tongue.

Let them [k]bear their guilt, O God!
they fall by their own counsels;
cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions,
for they have [l]rebelled against thee!
And all those shall be [m]glad that take refuge in thee:
they shall ever sing for joy that thou protectest them;
and they shall exult in thee who [n]love thy name.
For thou shalt bless the [o]righteous one, Jehovah:
with favor wilt thou compass him as with a [p]shield.

g Ps. 25. 4, 9. Ps. 27. 11.
h *cf.* Matt. 15. 8.
i Rom. 3.13.
j Prov. 28. 23. Prov. 29. 5. *cf.* Dan. 11. 32.
k Ps. 9. 16.
l Ps. 2. 3.
m Ps. 40. 16.
n cf. Rev. 3. 8.
o Ps. 4. 1, 5.
p Ps. 84. 11.

near to God at all, save "by the blood of Jesus"? It is this, I doubt not, toward which God is bringing His people in this psalm; and for this there is just beginning, and no more, that self-revelation of the soul that must come, for the need and efficacy of the blood to be known aright.

4. At present there is but an intimation of this. The psalmist is still too much in the presence of others whose wickedness, which is evident, comforts him, as it were, with the consciousness of his own uprightness. Yet he feels his weakness under the gaze of those keen and sinister eyes that watch for his halting, and prays to be led in God's path as made straight before his face, the only way of security and peace and power, for God is in it.

Around lie these enemies of the righteous, with a smooth but slippery tongue, their throat a yawning sepulchre, abysses within that none can fathom. Such is the divine picture—we may be very sure, therefore, no exaggerated one—of man away from God. What a morass to engulf the unwary! What a contradiction to the fixed clear certainty of the truth of God!

But let us notice again that all this, right as it is in desire, is nevertheless an intrusion into the third or sanctuary part of the psalm. What would have been completely in place as a proper fourth part,—that is, in the last three verses,—here takes away the larger part of the third, while it is itself diminished also in this way. How perfect is the very disorder that seems here! How full of meaning, and evidently designed! For with a soul not at rest, and for which the abiding presence of the Lord is not known, is it not just the walk, the practical conduct, that is the disturbing element; and that to its own damage? Where Christ is not thus rightly known, self is sure to intrude; and with peace holiness is marred, and God is little honored, though we desire it.

The enemies and hindrances here loom large also invariably, while the sanctuary has not power — because not in truth enjoyed — to shut them out. From how many exercises — only needed because we must be driven to it, if without this we do not lay hold of it — would the apprehension of the perfect grace of God deliver the soul!

5. And God must interfere for His own. Can it be a question, when wickedness is leagued against the righteous, with which side He will be? Can He give up the world to riot and misrule? No: He has promises to fulfill, blessings for the earth itself, which can only consist with the destruction of the wicked out of it. These promises are Israel's, as the apostle has very plainly told us. (Rom. ix. 4.) These blessings the faithfulness of God, spite of their present condition,

Ps. vi.

[t]PSALM VI.

The trial at its deepest felt as divine displeasure against sin, and the need realized of mercy.

To the chief musician, on [q]stringed instruments, upon [r]Sheminith: a psalm of David.

1 (1-3): Me! (i.) the cry of repentance. (ii.) wasting away! (iii.) the reality at bottom.

JEHOVAH, [s]rebuke me not in thine anger!
and chasten me not in heat of wrath!
Be [t]gracious to me, Jehovah, for I am wasting away:
heal me, Jehovah, for my [u]bones are shaken.
And my [v]soul is shaken exceedingly:
but thou, Jehovah, [w]how long?

[q] Ps. 4. Title.
[r] 1 Chron. 15. 21. Ps. 12. Title.
[s] Ps. 38. 1. *ctr.* Ps. 4. 8.
[t] Ps. 25. 7.
[u] Ps. 31. 10. *cf.* Ps. 22. 14, 17.
[v] Ps. 42. 6.
[w] Ps. 13. 1, 2. Jer. 12. 4. Dan. 8. 13. Dan. 12. 6. *cf.* Zech. 1. 12.

will fulfill to them. Let us not wonder, then, at the cry for judgment which we hear in this psalm: all the interests of man himself are bound up with the answer. The last verse gives once more the reason for this governmental interference, as well as the ground for the joy that He does thus interfere: "for Thou, Jehovah, wilt bless the righteous: with favor wilt Thou compass him as with a shield."

Yet, when God's terrible judgments are at hand, not theirs,—righteous in a true sense as these Jewish saints may be,—not theirs the attitude of the white-robed elders, peacefully seated on their thrones amid the lightnings and thunderings of the Throne which they surround. Needful, however painful, is the exercise of heart to which we shall find them now subjected. They are under His hand for good and not for evil; and though He lead the blind by a way they know not, He will at length make darkness light before them. The shadow of death shall be turned to morning,—"a morning without clouds."

Psalm VI.

The flutes are silent, and the music of the stringed instruments, better fitted to express the deeper emotions of the heart, follows them: and, indeed, in the bass notes, *al-sheminith*, "upon the octave" [below]. For, as far as this first series of psalms can go, which are but the beginning, we touch bottom here; and it is no accident that in this *fourth* of these hymns of experience, which emphasizes the "testing" of a soul, we find also just ten verses,* the responsibility number, according to the full measure of the law, the "ten words." In this psalm there is felt the pressure of that responsibility, and the failure and guilt realized when man is searched out as to the fulfillment of it.

1. For here is no longer vengeance invoked on others, no longer is there even the same comfort in the thought that "Jehovah has set apart the godly for Himself." It is, instead, "Jehovah, rebuke *me* not in Thine anger; and chasten *me* not in heat of wrath!" The malice of enemies is at work; nay, it is, as we may clearly see, what God has used to bring the soul where it is; but it is as *His* displeasure that it is realized, and when this presses, the anguish of the thought leaves room for nothing else, the enemies themselves are well-nigh forgotten. It is a cry of repentance and brokenness of heart: for Jehovah's wrath cannot be causeless, any more than powerless. And it *is* Jehovah,—it is the Unchangeable: this word, so full of comfort at another time, and to which he clings, too, to the end, for all his hope is in it,—has *it* not, nevertheless, an aspect of another kind in this time of distress? As Job says, "He is of one mind, and who can turn Him?" And yet how could there be any confidence apart from this?

So the soul pleads, and pleads on, for He is gracious, baring its grief and the effect of it even upon the body. Is He not Creator? Has He not made the body? Does *He* not feel, who has given the very capacity of feeling? The wasting flesh,

* As elsewhere, the title and musical inscription form no part of the psalm proper, as should be plain; and the verses should be numbered apart from this, as is the case in our common versions. That this is right is proved by the alphabetic psalms, such as psalms ix. and xxxiv., where the alphabet begins only with the numbered verses.

2 (4-7): The valley of deathshade.
(i.) the plea for mercy.
(ii.) death as separation from God.
(iii.) the realization.
(iv.) weakness.

[z]Return, Jehovah, rescue my soul:
save me for thy mercy's sake!
For in [y]death there is no remembrance of thee:
in [z]Sheol who shall give thee thanks?
I am [a]weary with my sighing:
every night I make my bed to swim;
I flood my couch with my [b]tears.
Mine eye is shrunk with vexation;
It is grown old with all that [c]straiten me.

x Ps. 90. 13.
y cf. Is. 38. 18, 19.
ctr. Phil. 1. 23.
z Ps. 88. 10–12.
cf. Eccl. 2. 15–17.
ctr. 2 Cor. 5. 6–8.
a Job 10. 1.
b Ps. 42. 3.
c Ps. 9. 6.
cf. Luke 18. 3.

the quaking of the very bones, all the strong helpers bowed with this distress: what it speaks of a faith that, more than it might seem, knows the tender pity of Him with whom it has to do! Blessed be God, it *is* so: underneath all the doubt, and amid the darkness, the groping arms turn to the God that *is*. The cry may be, "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!" But of Him that it would find it dares not doubt. Grace He has, heal He does, though as yet it sorely feels there is no healing; and as to itself the grace appears not.

And it is this delay that searches out the humbled and stricken one. This "how long?" which it is meant that one should feel, and is a question rightly entertained, how it tests the one who has to ask the question! The help so needed, how can it tarry so long, when His messengers are "angels that excel in strength," and the elements wait upon Him? "How long?" What conditions must be first fulfilled? What survey of the heavens and earth it implies, if to ourselves we would answer it! And this exercise is itself what is wrought in the silence and the darkness,—all the soul awake and alive to its centre, the conscience stirred, the heart attent, the whole man in activity. The travail is, after all, for fullest blessing; the doubtful questioning will at last find assured answer; the heart will be enriched with knowledge of the highest kind, in the joy of which it shall be glad forever.

2. Spite of its crying, the soul descends yet deeper into the darkness,—truly a valley of the shadow of death: for this it is, and as the curse of the broken law, which throws its pall over a living man. And who can plead exemption from death? Here the cry can be only for mercy,—mercy which must be free and sovereign, the bounty of God alone. This is the point to which Israel's remnant, naturally clinging to covenant-privileges, must be brought. According to covenant they can claim nothing but the *covenant-curse*. If they are to be saved, it must be upon the same ground as the merest Gentile. Pharisaism, which crucified the Son of God sent to them, must be swept out of existence; the cross they gave Him must be their only hope. Well may the sky darken and the lightnings flash from the dread mount by which they have chosen to abide, and from which divine mercy alone can save them. That is plainly the key to what we have here, while the lesson remains for every one, of every time, who needs it.

Death is seen as the curse of the law, as it truly was. Thank God, it does not dominate eternity, nor shut out the mercy of God as to that. As He never said "Do this, and thou shalt go to heaven," so neither did He ever say "Break this, and thou shalt go to hell." * The law itself was handmaid to the gospel, and God had ever in His purpose salvation, through His Son, for believing sinners. Yet as to what was beyond death, the soul that knew no more than law felt, of necessity, its shadow; and from the lips of such as those contemplated in this psalm, the language used in it has no special mystery. To these, and such as these, death as the curse of the law would be the hiding of God's face, the stilling of the voice of praise, the silence of outer darkness. But this is not the uniform language, even of the Old Testament, as to death,—far from it: it is the language of a special class in a certain state of soul, and that is all.

* It is well known that what is translated "hell" in the Old Testament is "Sheol," or "hades," the abode of the spirits of the dead.

3 (8–10): The revival.
(i.) vain strength.
(ii.) confirmation of soul.
(iii.) a prophecy of the end.

[d] Turn aside from me, workers of vanity!
for Jehovah hath [e] heard the voice of my weeping.
Jehovah hath heard my supplication;
Jehovah receiveth my prayer.
All mine enemies shall be [f] ashamed and shaken sore:
they shall turn back, they shall be put [g] suddenly to shame.

[d] Ps. 119. 115. Ps. 139. 19.
[e] Ps. 116. 1, 2.
[f] *cf.* Ps. 40. 14.
[g] Ps. 64. 7. *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 3.

Ps. vii.

[5] PSALM VII.

A pleading for righteous judgment upon the persecutors of the innocent.

[h] Shiggaion of David, which he sang unto Jehovah concerning the words of Cush a [i] Benjamite.

1 (1, 2): Abiding in the Abiding.

JEHOVAH my God, in thee have I taken [j] refuge:
save me from all my [k] pursuers, and rescue me!

[h] Hab. 3. 1.
[i] *cf.* 2. Sam. 16. 11.
[j] Ps. 11. 1. *cf.* Ps. 16. 1.
[k] Ps. 10. 2.

The effect of this is utter desolation and dismay. We surely see that it is not the ordinary picture of death for all that the psalmist has been drawing. There is no courage to meet what threatens, in which the separation from Jehovah is the overpowering thought. There is no manliness, as we say; no silent submission, even, to the inevitable: and he lets out freely all his emotion, the grief that convulses and unmans him. In the realization of it he floods his couch with tears. He fades away, and shrivels in premature decay. But this is the lowest depth, and having reached and taken it before God, the shadow passes from the soul.

3. In the last portion of the psalm we find this. The enemies are still around, so that circumstances seem not to have appreciably altered. The answer is from God in his heart: what now are the enemies? They are but "workers of vanity," — powerless with all their seeming might. His supplication is heard, and his soul confirmed. He can then calmly assure himself of the defeat of his enemies, and their final confusion.

But in this conclusion there is a lack which makes itself felt. We have nothing of the ground upon which — little of the manner in which — God's mercy meets the man who has justly merited His displeasure. The work of Christ is not yet unfolded. What grace implies cannot therefore yet be expressed. All is of the most elementary character: we simply see that it *is* mercy which alone can be man's confidence; when that is his plea God comes in for him. Yet even the full and adequate confession of sin as yet there is not, and it is most interesting to see how, after the revelation of the true sin-offering (Ps. xxii.), that confession is at once found. (Ps. xxv.) At present we have but the indication of what is to follow in the book: the finger points the way, but the road is not yet trodden.

Psalm VII.

The fifth psalm of this series closes it with another appeal for judgment upon the persecutor. This is now at hand, and the last verse celebrates Jehovah in millennial character as the Most High. The next psalm, as we have seen, carries us beyond the judgment to see the Son of man making God's name excellent on all the delivered earth. Thus all these psalms are linked together.

The word Shiggaion is said to mean a "wandering ode,"— perhaps a loud enthusiastic hymn, in which the writer is carried away with his enthusiasm; and this would not be unsuitable to the character of the composition. Of Cush we know historically nothing; with which the descriptive "a Benjamite" agrees, not "*the* Benjamite,"— any noted person. On the other hand, Cush, the "black," or sun-burnt, may be a symbolic name, an enigma to be read *through;* and so in any wise we must take it. The Benjamite was, as we know, in power in those

(ii.) from the destroyer.

Lest he tear like a [l]lion my soul,
rending in pieces, with none to rescue.

l Ps. 10. 9. *cf.* Ps. 17. 12.

2 (3-5): The persecution of mere enmity.

(i.) the plea of innocence.

Jehovah, my God, [m]if I have done this,
if iniquity be in my hands,
If I have requited evil to him that was at peace with me,—

m *cf.* Ps. 15. 2, etc. with Ps. 25. 11.

(ii.) yea, of having delivered the oppressor.

yea, I have [n]delivered him that without cause oppressed me,—

n *cf.* 1 Sam. 24. 3, 4.

(iii.) the seal upon this.

Let the enemy pursue my soul and overtake it;
yea, let him tread down my life to the earth,
and lay my glory in the dust! Selah.

3 (6-8): Let Jehovah appear!

(i.) show Thyself supreme!

[o]Arise, Jehovah, in thine anger!
lift up thyself amidst the rage of my oppressors,
and awake for me to the judgment thou hast commanded.

o Ps. 10. 12.

days of David to which the psalm belongs; and thus far, at least, Cush was connected with the unhappy Saul. In the days to come a darker power will have arisen in Israel, whose "words" will be against both God and His people alike. This "wicked one" is to be consumed with the breath of the Lord's mouth and destroyed with the "manifestation of His presence." (2 Thess. ii., *Gk.*) The fear and the triumph that this psalm expresses, though not confined to him, are such as might well be called forth by the tyranny and overthrow of this antichristian oppressor.

1. In the first division of the psalm, faith takes refuge in God from man, sheltering itself as in a rock in the immutability of its covenant-God. All through the last psalm, when that very immutability might seem to be against it, Jehovah was the name clung to and pleaded; and now it abides in its shelter in the Abiding. Will He cast off this soul that trusts Him? No; "the name of Jehovah is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe."

Outside, the "lion" lies in wait, and *there* there is "none to rescue." Only Jehovah can avail to deliver from those cruel and remorseless jaws; and surely the experience will be repeated, "Thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the jawbone: Thou has broken the teeth of the ungodly."

2. There follows the protestation of innocence as far as these enemies are concerned, and that is a matter of immense importance in view of the government of God. "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you" is still true under the reign of grace itself, and the lips of perfect grace they were that said it. The apostle also says, "If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here with fear; knowing that ye are redeemed . . . with the precious blood of Christ." (1 Pet. i. 17–19.) So then it is the *redeemed* who are in this way under the Father's government, as who should be if not the children? Happy are they, then, who can plead what the psalmist here does, that it is absolutely unprovoked, this malice of the enemy. There are no dues to be made up, as far as *he* is concerned. Nay, he can say more than this, and we recognize clearly David's conduct toward Saul as that which furnishes the text here,—he can say, "I have delivered him that without cause oppressed me." He then puts his seal upon this in the solemn appeal to Him who knows the truth to let the enemy have his way with him if this be not so,—tread down his life upon the earth, and lay his glory in the dust.

3. Now he breaks out in an ardent prayer for Jehovah to come in, set up His throne in judgment, gather the nations round Him, and in this great assembly judge openly his cause, and do him right. In fact, this is what is to take place at the close of the period to which prophetically the psalm looks on. But the

(ii.) amid the gathering of the nations.
(iii.) and manifest the reality of this.

And the [p]assembly of the races [of men] shall compass thee about,
and over it return thou on high!
Jehovah shall judge the peoples:
[q]right me, Jehovah, according to my righteousness,
and according to my integrity upon me!

4 (9, 10): The trial of hearts and reins.
(i.) by a righteous God.
(ii.) The Saviour of the upright.

Oh let the [r]evil of the ungodly cease!
and [s]establish thou the righteous;
even [t]trying the hearts and reins,
a righteous God!
My [u]shield is upon God,
who saveth the upright in heart.

5 (11–13): The government of God.
(i.) power on the side of the righteous.
(ii.) ready to intervene.
(iii.) the realization.

God judgeth [the cause of] the righteous,
and the Mighty hath [v]indignation every day:
If one turn not, he whetteth his [w]sword;
he hath bent his bow and made it ready;
And for him prepareth the weapons of death,
setting his arrows aflame.

6 (14–16): The course and end of the wicked.
(i.) a barren labor.
(ii.) with opposite end.

Behold, he [x]travaileth with vanity:
yea, he hath conceived toil,
but brought forth deception.
He hath [y]digged a pit, and holloweth it out,
and falleth into the ditch he is making.

p *cf.* Ps. 22. 28, 29.
q Ps. 26. 12. Ps. 72. 4.
r Ps. 9. 5, 6. *cf.* Ps. 89. 4.
s *cf.* Ps. 89. 4.
t Ps. 11. 4, 5. Zech. 13. 9.
u Ps. 3. 3.
v *cf.* Rom. 1. 18.
w Deut. 32. 41. *cf.* Rev. 19 15.
x *cf.* Jas. 1. 15.
y Esth. 9. 25. Ps. 9. 16. Prov. 1. 31.

judgment will not be a sessional one, but an outbreaking of divine wrath like the flashing of the storm to which the Lord Himself compares His coming. (Matt. xxiv. 27.)

4. The psalmist turns from the thought of his own vindication and deliverance to cry out for the cessation of evil upon the earth, the righteous being established in it, God with perfect knowledge of men making proof of all in the innermost truth of heart and reins. The great tribulation, of which our Lord speaks in the same prophecy, will accomplish this, not only in Israel, which will be in the centre of it, but largely also in the nations round, which will be affected by it. The day of the Lord of hosts will be upon all the pride of man to abase it, and upon all the objects with which he fain would satisfy the void in a heart that has turned from God. "The idols he shall utterly abolish." "And it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem, when Jehovah shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning." (Isa. ii. 18; iv. 3, 4.)

Well may the soul rejoice if it can say, as to that day, "My shield is upon God, who saveth the upright in heart"! Who, indeed, but He could use the shield for any at such a time?

5. The psalm goes on to contemplate the government of God, which is for righteousness, though patient in a way that may be misunderstood on both sides, — by righteous and wicked alike. Though patient, His anger burns against the impenitent, day by day stored up, until at last it flames forth. The sword is being sharpened, the bent bow makes no sound until the arrow is discharged: then it is a weapon of death, all aflame with divine vengeance.

6. The result as to the enemy of the righteous shows the hand that is over him. He toils to produce what is vain labor, has his toil for his pains, an end which deceives the laborer. It is not merely vain, it is his own undoing: the ditch dug

(iii.) the fruit reaped.

His toil returneth on his own head:
and on the crown of his head his violence descendeth.

7 (17): The end in praise.

I will [z]celebrate Jehovah according to his righteousness,
and sing praises to the name of Jehovah [a]most High.

z *cf.* Ps. 109. 29, 30.

a Ps. 9. 2.

SEC. 3. (Ps. viii.)

The Son of man in possession of His inheritance glorifies Jehovah in all the earth.

Ps. viii.

PSALM VIII.

To the chief musician, upon the [b]Gittith: a psalm of David.

b Ps. 81, 84. Titles. *cf.* 1 Sam. 27. 2, 3.

1 (1): Jehovah supreme: His glory above the heavens.

JEHOVAH [c]our Lord,* how [d]excellent is thy name in all the earth,
who hast [e]set thy glory above the heavens!

c *cf.* Isa. 26. 13.

d Ps. 148. 13. Phil. 2. 9–11.

e Ps. 57.5,11.

* Here, and in verse 9, a "plural of majesty."

for another is the trap to catch the digger. And thus the fruit of his toil he harvests in unwelcome fashion and most perfect retribution: for God is Master of all, and will be glorified in all.

7. So the psalm ends in praise to Him who is righteous and Supreme as well. And the millennial name—the "Most High," King of kings and Lord of lords,—shows, as already said, whereto we have arrived. The series is manifestly complete, and its moral purpose is as manifest. The way of the Lord is seen in the abasing of the proud, in the lifting up of the lowly. Therefore the lesson which we find the remnant of Israel here learning. The "sacrifices of righteousness" which we have heard them press on others, include and imply the "sacrifices of God," which "are a contrite spirit," the "broken and contrite heart" which He will "not despise." This is produced in them by the discipline of the awful day which seems now so near at hand for Israel and the earth. They "endure," bow under the rod, and are saved at the end when the rod smites.

All this is the utterance of the remnant that shall be, in which the Spirit of Christ has anticipated for them their need, and ministered to it beforehand, showing His intimacy with all their condition, and providing for its expression in words which they will have no difficulty in appropriating, and which lead on to the answer of peace of which the same psalms assure them. How gracious is this special ministry to special need; while the need of any at any time is provided for also. These psalms give us, as others have pointed out, a morning (ps. iii.) passing into evening (iv.) and night (v.),—a night at its deepest in psalm vi., but in the seventh showing the commencement of the dawn. The full day is come in the psalm following.

Sec. 3.

The third section contains only one psalm, quite distinct in character from the series before it, and which yet leads up to it, as we have seen. But it is (as they are not) Messianic,—a revival, as it were, of those claims of the Son of God to the throne, which, being rejected by the nations, He has forborne as yet to make good in power, as He will surely do. His time of patience has accomplished, in the mean while, the fulfillment of other purposes, even those in which "to the principalities and powers in heavenly places, is made known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God." (Eph. iii. 10.) Of this we must not expect any intimation here. We are here (as in Old Testament prophecy generally) in the line of Jewish hopes and promises.

Still we have not here the King on Zion, but the wider title of Son of man.

2 (2): Deliverance from the enemy.

/Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou established praise
because of thine *g*adversaries,
that thou mightest *h*still the enemy and the revenger.

/Matt.21.16. *cf.* Matt.11. 25. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 26, 29.
g Ps. 74. 10. Is. 59. 18.
h cf. Ps. 18. 17, 48; Isa. 51. 13.

This, of course, implies the taking of His other glories, and we shall have many a psalm later on that will present these. Here at the outset we need expect little detail, but the general features sketched of a picture that is to be filled in afterwards. The outline is given with a few bold touches sufficiently comprehensive. Not the King on Zion nor the Son owned of God is here, but the ideal man, the answer to the question, "what is man?"—God's head over the earth, and with gleams of higher glories,—Son of man, nevertheless, (decisively different in this from the first Adam,) through whom God is glorified on earth, and His glory set even above the heavens. Such is the wonderful scene that is here opened out to us.

It is a psalm of David, "upon the Gittith." Two interpretations of this are given, which practically are not far apart, however. "Some Hebrew scholars," says an anonymous writer whom we may often quote, "would regard it as the name of a musical instrument peculiar to Gath, where David once sought shelter from the unrelenting persecution of Saul. Just as there was among the Greeks a Dorian lyre, which had a wide celebrity on account of its excellent sweetness, so, it is suggested, this psaltery, Gittith, was borrowed by David from the citizens of Gath, and thence introduced by him on account of the superior sweetness of its tone and the beauty and elegance of its form. If this be the true interpretation, it suggests also a deeply spiritual reflection: for how often from the saddest occasions of temptation and distress in the devout life arise the gladdest songs of praise! The wild storm often makes the sweetest music on the Æolian harp.

"Bnt a more likely derivation may be found for this title, Gittith, in a Hebrew root, signifying "wine-press." And now it is an autumnal song chanted by the vine-dressers at the joyful vintage-season, when the blood of the grape is poured into the wine-vat. Still the same idea is prominent: sorrow and anguish, like the trodden clusters, are fruitful in the wine of a holy joy."

Whether it be Gath the city, or *gath* the wine-press, the root-word, and so the meaning, is the same, and the thought suggested acquires its fullest significance when we connect it with the cross. The wrath borne for men, the blood outpoured, were there for us the cause of a joy that shall never cease. And how simply it brings before us the apostle's quotation of this psalm, and the note which he makes upon the quotation: "we see Jesus, made a little lower than the angels *for the suffering of death*, crowned with glory and honor." (Heb. ii. 9.) One might easily imagine that the apostle had in mind the "*al haggittith*" of the psalm from which he quotes.

1. So brief yet so comprehensive as it is, the psalm has comparatively many divisions. It begins and ends with the glory of God, Jehovah's name being now excellent in all the earth. But there is more than this: He has set His glory also above the heavens.

It should be evident when we consider what is the great subject before us, that all this has a deeper meaning than at first sight we might give it. The Lord as Son of man, taking possession of the earth as His inheritance, makes everywhere Jehovah's name excellent in it. When, as Zechariah prophesies, "the Lord my God shall come, and all His saints with Thee," His feet standing upon the mount of Olives, from which He went up, then "Jehovah shall be King over all the earth; in that day there shall be one Jehovah, and His Name one." (Zech. xiv. 3, 5, 10.)

The application in this way is simple, and it throws light upon the rest of the verse: for then surely we can see that the glory that is set above the heavens is

3 (3–5): Once humbled, crowned with glory.
(i.) the power of God so great.
(ii.) the wonder of man's relation to Him.
(iii.) his exaltation.

When I [i]behold the heavens, the work of thy fingers,
moon and stars which thou hast [j]established,
[k]What is man, that thou rememberest him?
and the [l]son of man, that thou visitest him?
And thou makest him a [m]little lower than the angels,*
and with glory and honor thou [n]crownest him.

* Elohim, God or gods, sometimes applied to angels; and so the Septuagint and Heb. ii. 6. (See notes.)

i Ps. 19. 1. Isa. 40. 25, 26. Ps. 147. 4. Job 38. 31–33.
j Gen. 1. 14–19.
k Heb. 2, 6–9. Ps. 144. 3.
l *cf.* Jno. 5. 25. *cf.* Jno. 1. 51. m *cf.* Phil. 2. 6–11; *cf.* Jno. 1. 14; *cf.* Ps. 102; 23–27 with Heb. 1. 10–12. n *cf.* Ps. 21. 1–4; *cf.* Heb. 1. 3; *cf.* Rev. 19. 12.

connected with the work of this same blessed Person. It is not the glory of moon and stars spread *over* the heavens, such as the psalmist speaks of in the third verse, but a glory *above* all created things, however wondrous. Jehovah it is who is manifest in this Son of man, in whose lowly position just the wonder of His condescending love appears. Supreme in power, He is as supreme in moral glory, and in Christ how does this shine out! Thus the praise of earth ascends to Him, owning His rightful rule: "Jehovah our Lord, how excellent is Thy Name in all the earth!"

2. Its deliverance has come, therefore, from the oppressor: it is not merely that the voice of calumny has been stopped, as interpreters have taken this verse to mean, but the enemy has passed away. In a fuller sense than could be said of Solomon's peaceful reign, "there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent." So then it is by more than the *praise* of babes and sucklings that the enemy is silenced, and the Lord's quotation of the passage with reference to the hosannas of the children does not at all entail such a consequence as this. It is He Himself who will "smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips destroy the wicked." But yet for this He will establish praise out of the mouth of babes and sucklings; that is, I doubt not, of new-converted souls, humbled and brought down to such conscious littleness and weakness as this implies. We have again from His lips such a comparison in the well-known words, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." Thus we see clearly why He must produce such praise in order that the kingdom may come: the heirs of it must be made ready.

The little children in the temple foreshadowed such praise as this, and in this way the language could be suitably used with reference to them. The actual fulfillment will be in those future days to which, as we have seen, these psalms look on.

3. The third section brings us to the central subject of the psalm, a spiritual enigma, no doubt, scarcely read in its true meaning until the New Testament light was thrown upon it. At first sight it is just man—the race—of which the psalmist speaks; and the question asked is really of this nature: but the answer is a secret for the ear of faith, like much more that we shall find as we go on with him. Man (the race) is, in fact, but what the fall has made him; and what can be really said for him? What can justify God's regard for this ruined creature? Go back to his creation,—put him in the seat from which he fell,—think of the earth as subjected to him,—alas, he seems but to mock the approving words with which his Maker greeted him. Restore him, if it were possible, even to that original excellency, how shall the scepter be again intrusted to hands that have failed so signally to wield it? How, then, could God go on with such an one?

Really you have no answer till you have a *Second* Man,—until you can find one unruined, and with better pledges for the future: no use in mere restoration, in mending such a broken vessel as the first; set him aside, and let another take his office; if, indeed, that other can be found.

Here Christ then comes in, really a Second Man. Yet "Son of Man" also,

4 (6–8): All the earth put under Him.
(i.) his rule.
(ii.) his subjects.
(iii.) the heavens and the deep.
5 (9): man with God.

Thou makest him [o] rule over the works of thy hands;
thou hast [p] put everything under his feet:
[q] Sheep and oxen, all of them,
and also the [r] beasts of the field;
[s] Bird of the heavens, and [t] fish of the sea,
whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.
[u] Jehovah our Lord:
how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

o Gen. 1. 28. Gen. 9. 2. *cf.* Rom. 5. 14.
p 1 Cor. 15. 27. Eph. 1. 22. Heb. 2. 6. Col. 1. 15. 1 Pet. 3. 22.
q *cf.* Dan. 2. 38. *cf.* Lev. 1. 2. *cf.* Isa. 60. 7.
r *cf.* Isa. 11. 6–9. s *cf.* 1 Ki. 17. 4–6. t *cf.* Jonah 1. 17; *cf.* Jno. 2. 10; *cf.* Matt. 17. 27. u ver. 1.

linked with the race in that manner, so as to be able to stand before God the representative of those who in faith look to Him,—the "Seed of the woman," who should bruise the serpent's head.

Thus He is "made a little lower than the angels," as the apostle explains, "on account of the suffering of death." It is not merely that man's condition is by creation a little lower, but Christ as become Son of man is made that. It is a true descent that we are to think of here, and the word used for "angels"—really "gods," and the ordinary word for "God" (*Elohim*)—has thus in its very ambiguity peculiar significance. God He indeed was, who had come down to be a little lower than God,—lower even than those habitually representing Him to men,* and so identified with Him, as the angels are: the apostle accepts the Septuagint translation, therefore, "angels."

"On account of the suffering of death" He had to come down there. Man was under death as penalty, and therefore One had to come in who by voluntary submission to the penalty could glorify God as righteous in it, manifest the holiness of His nature as against sin, but thus also manifest His love in providing escape. And for this, humanity had to be taken; immeasurably exalted indeed, by that which was His humiliation, but now how wondrously in His exaltation! For He laid down only to take up again that "body prepared," and as a Man forever is risen and gone up to God. What meaning is in this way given to the words, "with glory and honor Thou crownest Him"!

4. Now we have his dominion, the first man's rule being repeated and emphasized in the Second Man. "Thou makest Him rule over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put everything under His feet." Here again, as we take earth-angles to measure the heavens, so the earth-kingdom of Adam is made to indicate an empire that is universal. And the apostle teaches us that we may take the expressions here in the uttermost truth of them: "in that He put all things under Him, He left *nothing* that is not put under Him."

The psalm naturally, however, clings to earth, though the things mentioned are not forbidden a deeper meaning: "sheep and oxen" give us, of course, the domestic animals; the "beasts of the field," what we speak of as untamed. The spiritual meaning may without difficulty be found by those that will. The heavens and the deep speak of spheres above and below the earth, as the spiritual ranks of the higher heavens serve with delight the Son of man on the one hand, while He has also on the other "the keys of death and of hell."

5. In all this we are dull scholars, but the general thought is plain. It is no wonder that the psalm ends with that with which it begins; the whole clasped, as it were, together with the uniting bond that has joined God with man, and thus made His name excellent in all the earth,—with a glory, too, which is set above the heavens!

SUBD. 2.

In the second subdivision of the first book, upon which now we enter, we find not Christ but Antichrist, though not indeed explicitly as that, but as the enemy

* See John x. 34, 35: where, though the principle is the same, the application is to the judges in Israel.

of God and man; and in Israel the persecutor of the righteous, the lawless one. There are also other and outside enemies from the *goyim*, the Gentiles,—Antichrist, the false Messiah being a Jew, and owned by the apostate mass as King of the Jews. These things, forming the circumstances of the last days before the coming of the Son of man, and in the midst of which the remnant whose sorrows and whose faith we have been listening to are found,—are not entered into in detail as yet: they will be more and more developed as we go on with the book. We have only here the broad lights and shadows of the picture,—the time, as we have seen, of Jacob's trouble, ended by full and abiding deliverance. Meanwhile faith is exercised; and we have these exercises, in which also to a greater or less extent, every generation of God's saints has shared, and into which, therefore, all may enter. Their character is distinct from that of the last series: the question is that of the power and prevalence of evil upon earth, and of the oppression practised; but although the soul may cry, "How long wilt Thou forget?" it does not dread, as before, the anger of God. Conscience is not now ploughed up as it was before, and the sense of relationship to God is not perplexed.

Sec. 1.

There are but two sections in this subdivision: the first giving the theme, the second the exercises; and this last, we may notice, is again a series of *five* psalms.

The first section has but two psalms, which in the Septuagint and Vulgate are united together, as in a real way they are by an alphabetic arrangement which, though irregular and even defective, can be distinctly traced, and which runs through them both,—psalm ix. ending with the first half of the alphabet, while psalm x., with a significant omission, carries it to the end. This does not show that they are one psalm, however, nor are they: the subjects are different, though so closely connected: two parts of one theme.

The alphabetic character of the two psalms being admitted, as it generally is, the irregularity of structure, as well as the absence of at least seven out of the twenty-two letters, should be accounted for in order to any full rendering. The doctrine of verbal inspiration, with all that it implies, cannot allow us to lose sight even of letters, when these are brought before us so prominently as they are in this case. *Mind*—the divine mind—must be realized as governing everywhere, if we would consistently maintain this: if we do not look for it, the loss will be our own; and how great a loss! Yet interpretation after this manner has scarcely as yet been even an ideal; and attempts to realize it have to meet all that indifference and unbelief, supported by the long habit of neglect, can urge against them. For this reason we feel constrained to look the more closely at the problem presented here,—a problem which manifestly makes more intricate that of numerical structure,—*if* it be not, on the other hand, really a divine help toward intelligence: any way a test for it of the severest character. The ordinary psalms are severe enough: the verses here not the mere artificial human device which in the prose books we have examined we had to disregard in the very interest of the sense, and to which no one attaches any importance. Here, on the contrary, no one has any doubt as to there being, quite as much as in most poetry of our own day, a reality to be taken account of. In ordinary versification, indeed, this is but a question of style: the verses are only, to an extent quite uncertain and irregular, a division of the subject. On the other hand, in Scripture, where the human hand has been overruled—guided better than it knew—by the divine Spirit, we cannot be permitted such a refuge from inquiry. Numerical structure, it would seem, must account for the division of verses, in the same way that it accounts for the larger divisions of the books; the larger and smaller having, of course, proportional importance, but still all of them having *some* importance. At least this is the question we have set out to seek answer to, with the conviction beforehand, such as animates the microscopist in his explorations into nature, that there *is* meaning to be found.

In these two psalms alone there will thus be thirty-eight divisions, with the

addition of those represented by the letters, which amount to fifteen larger ones. Besides this, the very gaps in the alphabet will probably furnish more; while even so the *primary* divisions, largest of all, are not thus reached. It will be found that there are, as given in our analysis above, fifty-seven divisions to be accounted for and put into meaning,—all these to be united into one consistent whole, which itself fills its own significant place, as one seventy-fifth part of the book of psalms. Certainly, if this be done, if even it be defectively, with any *appearance* of success, one can only account for it by the fact of the divine inspiration of the psalmist, as one writing *much better than he knew*, which was, as we know well, only the ordinary manner of the prophet. (1 Pet. i. 12.)

The defective and irregular character of the alphabetic structure has naturally elicited some effort to explain it on the part of a few, who have thought so small a matter to be worth their while. Thus one commentator writes:

"These two psalms manifestly constitute one alphabetical composition, comprising twenty-two stanzas, each a quartet, according to the number and order of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet; of these twenty-two stanzas, seventeen now remain. Five stanzas, equivalent to twenty lines, are now wanting. To supply this deficiency, there are thirteen lines, equivalent to three stanzas and one line, which cannot now be arranged in the psalm, because their initial letters correspond not with the missing stanzas. Whenever Hebrew manuscripts shall be brought to light, by their various readings enabling us to insert these lines in their proper place, there will still remain a deficit of seven lines to constitute and complete the missing quartets. It would seem that this division of this alphabetical composition into two psalms *was intentional*, to conceal the alphabetical arrangement, and to blind men to the deficiency of these seven lines, and to the misplacing of the thirteen lines above. No such division exists in the LXX. or Vulgate versions. Of the 718 Hebrew MSS. and Editions of the Psalms collated by Kennicott and De Rossi, and of the ancient versions, none afford light or authority for the correction of the irregularities, transpositions and deficiencies of this alphabetical psalm."

Thus, according to this writer, the psalm, or psalms, here have got somehow into a disorder, which would seem hopeless, and which copyists, in their hopelessness (it is to be presumed), have striven to cover up. This is hardly to be believed. Such disorder, in an alphabetic psalm of all others, would have been easily detected, and, at the first, quite easily set right. It is impossible to suppose that such wholesale error should have corrupted all other manuscripts and versions; and if we could think it, the question of the Hebrew text to-day would be indeed a serious one. Nor upon the face of these psalms does there appear any answering confusion of meaning to correspond with such an hypothesis. All is supposition merely, founded upon another supposition as baseless—that the alphabetic structure must have been intended to have perfect regularity; but this is not found completely in some other of the acrostic psalms.

May not the irregularity be itself designed? True, if it be only a (questionable) taste that has given this form to the psalms,—if it be but a help to memory, or even have, as Moll suggests, "symbolic reference to their completeness and wholeness, since only instructive poems and psalms of lamentation present this alphabetic arrangement,"—*then* it seems impossible to see reason for a disturbance of that regularity which alone would suit such ideas. Nor can one well understand why no more psalms than these should take this form, nor why these specially; nor indeed why a psalm of *lamentation* should require such completeness or wholeness at all. But we have already seen, in Psalm V., how the breaking in upon the ordinary symmetry of the 4 x 3 arrangement there can have thorough and spiritual significance. And why not equally the disturbance here?

It is surely natural to see in the alphabetic arrangement a symbol of *order impressed by a governing mind.* A numerical structure by itself expresses this; and an alphabetic one, making use of all the elements of human speech, seems as if it were indeed intended to make that order vocal. Whatever else it may express, it is at least competent to express this.

Now, if we consider the subject of these two psalms as already briefly intimated, and as we shall more fully have before us as we go through them in detail, both the relation of this structure to them, and the reason of its partial derangement also, come at once into the light. The subject is the crisis of Israel's history and the world's: a time in which the conflict of evil with good will have risen to its height, when all foundations may seem to be destroyed, and yet when shortly will be demonstrated, as never before, how thoroughly under divine control all is. The convulsion will be found but the throes and travail of a childbirth, out of which a new Israel and a new world will issue. Thus the general order and control of the alphabetic arrangement, broken in upon (as to its *expression*) in the gap of six letters which seem to be fallen out near the beginning of the tenth psalm, but then once more coming into sight and maintained to the end.

So the structure vindicates itself, and is in perfect harmony with the contents all through; and examine this more minutely,—put it more fully to the proof,—it will abide the proof, and still more incontestably reveal the design that is in it. For notice where this apparently structureless gap occurs: not in the ninth psalm, throughout which the reign of the Most High is celebrated, but, as already said, near the beginning of the tenth, *where the man of sin is described.* As soon as the description is ended, and the appeal begins afresh, "Arise, Jehovah!" the alphabetic structure is resumed. It is this wicked one who seems for a time to resist the government of God, and prevail even against the Most High; but this cannot be really so,—soon and finally his power is gone, and the clouds too from around the everlasting Throne, and Jehovah is, as He has always been, the Eternal and Unchangeable.

Six letters here have dropped out; but in this fact—in the number here—is there not again significance? For what does this number symbolize but just evil risen to its height, and yet limited and controlled by God? and what number then would be just so right as this is to convey the exact truth of what is here, —the needed corrective of the unbelief which the rampant energy of evil must provoke?

We see then that the psalm is as it should be, and that its irregularity as well as its regularity are alike of God. Is there not pardonable a little enthusiasm over the possession of such a revelation from God with its seal upon its front, as thus has come to us? The Lord arouse His people to understand aright the portion He has given them!

Psalm IX.

We come now then to the consideration of these psalms in detail. The ninth has for its subject the contemplation of that throne of righteousness which the earth has so long desired to see and found not. Christ as the King of righteousness has been refused, and the world has sought all kinds of substitutes for Him in vain. It must be but in vain! Yet the "desire of all nations" shall come, and shall be found in Him. He shall be "King of kings and Lord of lords."

The inscription is considered a difficult one, and has had, as usual in such cases, many interpretations. *Muth-labben* means most naturally, however, and is most commonly taken to be, "Death for the son." Remembering the Egyptian oppression out of which Moses and the people of Israel as a whole were saved, and which God remembered against Egypt on the passover night of their deliverance,—and remembering, too, that here we have the final and worst tribulation of the same people Israel, when out of the bitterest persecution they shall be delivered,—there is no great difficulty in the application of the inscription in this way. So taken it confirms from another side the meaning of the psalm.

1. The psalm begins with an outburst of praise to the Most High—that millennial name of God with which the seventh psalm ended. Israel's tongue is loosed, the whole heart united in this praise. It is Jehovah, the covenant God, the Living and Unchangeable, who is now manifested as this, whose wondrous, works have made Him known, and these as being the means of their own deliv-

SUBD. 2. (Ps. ix.-xv.)

The remnant in relation to the enemy and the transgressors in Israel.

SEC. 1. (Ps. ix., x.)

The theme: The Supreme, and the Lawless One.

Ps. ix.

[1]PSALM IX.

The throne of righteousness.

To the chief musician. Upon [v]Muth-labben. A psalm of David.

(*Aleph.*)
I WILL [w]praise Jehovah with [x]all my heart:
I will [y]declare all thy wondrous works.
I will rejoice and [z]exult in thee:
I will sing psalms to thy name, O [a]Most High.

(*Beth.*) When my enemies turn back,
they [b]stumble and perish from before thy face.
For thou hast [c]maintained my right and my cause:
thou sittest on the throne, [d]judging right.
(*Gimel.*) Thou hast [e]rebuked nations, thou hast [f]destroyed the wicked,
thou hast [g]blotted out their name for ever and aye!
(*He.*) The enemy—[his] desolations are come to a perpetual end;
and thou hast rooted up [h]cities, their remembrance is perished with them.

1 (1, 2): Celebration of the most High. (i.) Jehovah! with all the heart. (ii.) confirmation.
2 (3-6): Deliverance from the enemy. *a* (3, 4) righteousness for the righteous. (i.) efficient power. (ii.) witnessing for me. *b* (5): destruction of the wicked. *c* (6): full restoration.

v cf. Ex. 1. 22. Ex. 11. 4, 5.
w Ps. 107. 1, 2.
x Ps. 111. 1.
y Ps. 105. 2.
z Ps. 5. 11. Ps. 34. 2.
a Gen 14.18, 19, 20, 22. Deut. 32. 8. Ps. 7. 17. *cf.* Isa. 14. 13, 14.
b Ps. 18. 38.
c Ps. 18. 20. Ps. 43. 1.
d vers. 8, 16.
e vers. 19, 20. Ps. 68. 30.
f Ps. 10. 16.
g cf. Josh. 6. 21, etc.
h cf. Josh. 8. 28.

erance, and with their new-opened mouth, Israel will declare. David the Israelite has long since led, and still leads, in such strains as these; and Christ, the antitype of David, will lead "in the midst of the assembly," in the days to come.

The speaker repeats, confirms, and amplifies the song of praise. It is God Himself in whom he rejoices, and whom His works make known; it is His name which he celebrates in psalms. This is indeed the joy of joys, that, as is not the case with changeful man, what He has done is the real manifestation of Himself, His nature,—and that is what His "Name" implies. Thus we can know Him better than we can know ourselves: for the heart of man, "who can know it?"

What a joy indeed, to have Him manifestly reigning—Christ the perfect expression of what He is, and Christ upon the throne!

2. Deliverance from the enemy is what now their hearts are full of: righteous deliverance for the righteous, as the seventh psalm has declared it as far as the oppressor is concerned: *he* has no claim that the divine government can recognize. There is efficient power, and when the work of deliverance begins, it is fully accomplished: when the enemies turn back, they stumble and perish, for God is there. Israel can now say, "Thou hast maintained my right and my cause;" and it is One who plainly sits upon the throne who does so.

Nor is this deliverance local merely. It connects itself with the judgment of the earth, and the destruction of the wicked out of it: even their name is blotted out and disappears; and this involves a moral change of the face of the world, which makes haste in this way to forget them. More than this, the desolations wrought by the reign of evil are over: the "times of restitution" are come,—summer and fruitage for all the earth, with quiet rest under the care of the good Shepherd. For He it is who reigns, and the iron rod has destroyed those only who destroy the earth.

3. Jehovah dwells in Zion, and His rule has all the character of divine benefi-

3 (7-12): The Holy One dwelling in Zion.
a (7-10): abiding the Righteous One.
(i.) His eternal throne.
(ii.) His ministry of judgment.
(iii.) Himself a refuge.
(iv.) tested and proved.
b (11, 12): Testimony to the nations.
(i.) of the King in Zion.
(ii.) answering the blood-cry.
4 (13,14): The experience.
(i.) the cry for grace.

(*Vau.*) But Jehovah [i]abideth for ever:
who establisheth his [j]throne for judgment.
And *he* shall [k]judge the world in righteousness:
he shall give judgment in uprightness to the races [of men.]
And Jehovah shall be a [l]stronghold for the oppressed,
a stronghold in seasons of strait.
And they that [m]know thy name will trust in thee;
for thou, Jehovah, hast [n]not forsaken them that seek thee.
(*Zain.*) Sing psalms to Jehovah who [o]dwelleth in Zion:
[p]tell his deeds among the peoples:
That he who [q]searcheth out blood hath remembered them:
he hath not [r]forgotten the cry of the afflicted.
(*Cheth.*) Be [s]gracious to me, Jehovah;
behold my affliction from them that hate me:
[t]lifting me up from the gates of death!

i Ps. 29. 10 Ps. 102. 26, 27.
j Ps. 103. 19.
k Ps. 50.3-6. Ps. 96. 10, 13. *cf.* Matt.25. 31-46.
l Ps. 37. 39. Ps. 71. 3.
m Ps. 91. 14. *cf.* Jno. 17. 26.
n cfr. Ps. 22. 1.
o Ps. 2. 6. Ps. 50. 2.
p 1 Chr. 16. 24. *cf.* Is. 66.19.
q cf. Matt. 27. 25. Gen. 4. 10.
r cf. Lk. 1. 68-71. *cf.* Lk. 18. 1-8.
s cf. Ps. 6. 2.
t Ps. 107. 18, 19.

cence. Man is no longer a stranger and an exile from God. The earth returned to her orbit circles round her central sun.

(*a*) It is the rule of the Eternal: while other kingdoms arise and fall, this endures: "Jehovah abideth forever." No danger of a failure in the succession; no uncertainty from transmission through many hands: the glorious Priest-King never resigns or forfeits His throne to others; He is Himself the dynasty, and its character will never change: He "establisheth His throne for judgment; and *He* shall judge the world in righteousness, He shall give judgment in uprightness to the races of men." Thus there is no fear either of the clashing of party interests or of national prejudices, or of aught else. One King is King to all, ministering incorruptible justice to all alike. Rule is now true service, and the oppressed is secure of a ready hearing in the one ever-accessible court of appeal. He is their refuge, their sanctuary,—"a stronghold in seasons of strait." This is no theory merely: there is no contradiction between the ideal and the real. It is known by experience, affirmed by the consciousness of all His people: for "they that know Thy Name will trust in Thee: for Thou, Jehovah, hast not forsaken them that seek Thee."

(*b*) Israel is naturally the witness of all this in her own experience, and by her deliverance will "tell out His deeds among the peoples"—the nations brought at last to be His own. The persecution even to death of the chosen nation He has now remembered: their cry has come up into His ears. Now He dwells in Zion, and forever; the wings that long since would have sheltered them, are now stretched over them,—at rest in the love that has drawn them nigh.

4. After all this—strangely as it seems, no doubt,—we have the actual cry of distress; and to the end of the psalm, though there are outbursts of triumphant anticipation, the deliverance contemplated is seen not to be really come as yet. And this character of the psalm we shall find repeated in many future ones. The realization of faith comes first, and then the actual circumstances are seen, out of which faith looks to the fulfillment of precious promises, which are indeed as sure as if fulfilled. The stand-point of the psalm is thus that of those for whom it has been specially prepared, and their faith is strengthened by such Spirit-inspired glimpses as we have had into the then so near future, the bright fulfillment of the longings and prayers of successive generations of saints, who died with its light-glow in their faces. And this hope too is ours, with its bright-

(ii.) and that salvation may be declared.
5 (15-17): Governmental ways.
a (15, 16): consistent righteousness.
(i.) suicidal course of the wicked.
(ii.) the testimony to Jehovah.
b (17): death of the wicked.

That I may [u]declare all thy praise in the [v]gates of the daughter of Zion;
that I may [w]exult in thy salvation.

(*Teth.*) The nations have [x]sunk in the pit that they made;
in the net that they hid is their [y]own foot taken.
Jehovah is [z]known [by] the judgment he hath executed:
the wicked is snared in the work of his hands.
[a]Higgaion. Selah.
(*Jod*) The wicked are turned into [b]Sheol:
all the nations that [c]forget God.

u ver. 1. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 9.
v cf. Ps. 116. 17-19.
w Ex. 14.13. Ps. 13. 5.
x Ps.7.15,16.
y Ps. 141.10.
z Ex. 7. 5. *cf.* Isa. 26. 8-10.
a Ps. 19. 14. Ps. 92. 3.
b cf. Rev.19. 20 with Matt. 25. 46. *ctr.* Ps.30.5.
c Ps. 50. 22; Ps. 10. 4.

ness only intensified by the fact that ours too are *heavenly* promises, and that as "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ" we are to see and rejoice in the earth's bridal-glory, when the Bridegroom-King shall be "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." Our interest in these things is not likely to be spoiled by the fact of *fuller* entrance than Israel herself into this ineffable joy.

Here then we have the experience of Jacob's hour of trial once again, the cry —though with the confidence begotten of previous anticipations—from the very "gates of death." Yet they expect to change this yawning shadow for the "gates of the daughter of Zion," and to praise Jehovah there, exulting in His salvation—not surely a mere temporal deliverance. We have seen already (Ps. vi.) what death is linked with in their minds; and corresponding with this is the meaning of deliverance from it for the hearts of these worshipers—a praise that shall be led of Messiah Himself.

5. Thus again faith descries the future from its firm ground in the prophetic word, and rehearses the righteous ways of divine government in quite a similar manner to the seventh psalm. These things need the emphasis of repetition for men's careless ears. The nations sink into a pit their own hands have prepared, and are taken in the net they have hid for their own entanglement. And this is Jehovah's judgment, the unswerving ways by which Jehovah is made known. Higgaion: here is "meditation" for those who do not refuse it: let them "ponder it in their own hearts upon their beds, and be still."

And "the wicked are turned into Sheol,—all the nations that forget God." This is still, of course, the judgment of the world that is in question: final it is, as far as the world goes. but yet not the full eternal judgment which the New Testament reveals. For this, sheol or hades must deliver up its dead, (held by it only as prisoners for the assize,) and the "resurrection of judgment" introduce them to "the great white throne" for discriminating sentence. (Rev. xx.) This we have not here, nor generally in the Old Testament. Death—what we ordinarily call that—is, as we see it everywhere, the *legal* penalty, though still with the shadow of divine wrath therefore in it. It is here the doom of "outer darkness," outside the day of earth's festival and joy; the doom of those who "forget God;" and thus we understand the cry of the sixth psalm, though there in the lips of those to whom forgetfulness of God is the misery they dread: "for in death there is no remembrance of Thee; in Sheol who shall give Thee thanks?" It is the doom of those who have *chosen* to forget God, but as contemplated by those with whom, according to the well-understood parallelism here, to "remember" is to "give Him thanks." Alas, it is the portion they have chosen they will have—aye, and *must* have, because they have chosen it, *not* because *He* has chosen it for them. From so awful a thought as this He has interposed his oath to save us: "*As I live*, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth: therefore turn yourselves and live ye."

6. The psalm concludes with prayer, mingled with the assurance which he who prays whispers to his heart. Frail man, thrusting himself across the path

6 (18-20): Frail man.
(i.) not for ever.
(ii.) prayer for deliverance.
(iii.) the self-manifestation.

(*Caph.*) For the [d]needy shall not be perpetually forgotten:
the expectation of the meek shall not perish for aye.
[e]Arise, Jehovah! let not frail man be strong:
let the nations be judged before thy face!
Put them in [f]fear, Jehovah!
that the nations may know themselves to be [g]frail men.

d *cf.* Ps. 31. 12. Rom. 11. 1, 2. Prov. 23. 17, 18.
e Ps. 7. 6.
f Ps. 14. 5.
g Isa. 40. 15, 22.

Ps. x.

[2]PSALM X.

The wicked one, and the deliverance.

1 (1, 2): The cause of the cry.
(i.) appeal to Jehovah.
(ii.) the persecution.

(*Lamed.*)
WHY standest thou [h]afar off, Jehovah?
hidest thyself in seasons of [i]strait?
In the [j]haughtiness of the wicked doth he hotly pursue the humble:
they are being [k]taken in the plots that they have devised.

h Ps. 35. 22. Ps. 71. 12. *cf.* Ps. 27. 5.
i *cf.* Jer. 30. 7.
j *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 4. *cf.* Dan. 11. 36.
k Ps. 7. 15. Ps. 9. 16.

of the almighty purpose! what must be the end? God's people may be indeed the "needy," and with no spirit of self-assertion, scarcely turning as the worm upon the foot of him that treads on it—the "meek." Aye, but it is because, not their despair, but their "expectation" quiets them. "My soul, wait thou upon God," is the reminder with which they control themselves. Shall they be forgotten perpetually, though for a time it seem so? shall *such* expectation come to naught? shall they who have *no* hope but in God be disappointed by Him? No: it is impossible to entertain the thought. And so out of that conviction comes the cry—

"Arise, Jehovah! let not frail man be (thus) strong!" has not his success reached already the ordained bound? "let the nations be judged before Thy face!" They have forgotten Thee, and so can boast themselves: let Thy presence convict them of their folly, and rebuke the vain pretension; "put them in fear, Jehovah! that the nations may know themselves to be frail men!"

Thus the psalm ends. Though irregular in its construction, the alphabetic arrangement only lacks one letter, so far as it goes, which is just half-way through the alphabet. Thus, instead of eleven letters, there are *ten*—the psalm clinging, indeed, to what this number indicates—human responsibility and recompense; while the omitted letter, *daleth*, standing for the number 4, which speaks of creature weakness and failure, may find in this the reason of its omission from a psalm which throughout so strongly emphasizes the indefectible righteousness of the divine government. Reason will certainly be found everywhere for every "jot and tittle" of the inspired word which we are considering. Believing research will find that every claim that has been made for it on that score fails only in feebleness of statement, not in excess.

Psalm X.

The tenth psalm, linked too closely with the ninth to have any separate title, is occupied largely with the description of the wicked one, as we have seen; and this is the cause of a gap in the alphabetic arrangement, six letters (from *Mem* to *Tzaddi*) being absent. Delitzsch would find, however, six strophes standing here to represent them, but the numerical division is into five parts, which are very unequal. The larger divisions are three: it is in fact a sort of resurrection psalm.

1. The first division gives us only the cry to Jehovah with the cause of the cry, this being the persecution of the humble by the wicked one. "Why standest Thou afar off, Jehovah? [why] hidest Thou Thyself in seasons of strait?" The previous psalm had declared God to be a stronghold in just such seasons

2 (3–11): The enemy of God and man.
a (3, 4): his pride.
(i.) as independence of God.
(ii.) as denial of God.
b (5, 6): his security.
(i.) self alone in sight.
(ii.) his self-assurance.
c (7): out of his heart.

For the wicked one [l]boasteth of his soul's desire;
and the covetous renounceth, he scorneth, Jehovah.
The wicked in his disdain [saith], He will not [m]seek it out:
there is [n]no God in all his plots.
Sure are his ways at all times:
high are thy judgments [o]out of his sight;
all his adversaries, he [p]puffeth at them.
He saith in his [q]heart, "I shall not be moved:
from generation to generation one in no calamity."
His [r]mouth is full of cursing and deceit and oppression:
[s]under his tongue are trouble and vanity.

l Ps. 94. 4. Ps 52. 1-4. cf. Dan.8.9-12, 23-25.
m ver. 11.
n Ps. 14. 1. cf. Dan. 11. 37.
o Isa. 55. 9.
p Ps. 12. 5. cf. Isa. 36. 4-9.
q ver. 11. Deut.29.19.
r cf. Rom.3. 14. cf. Rev. 13. 11.
s Ps. 140. 3. cf. Dan. 8. 25. cf. Dan. 11. 21, 23; cf. Rev. 13. 14.

(verse 9). Why such dissimilarity between the faith and the experience? But in truth faith in no wise rests upon experience here, but confesses that, as to His government, clouds and darkness may be round about Him. True, at last experience will come round to faith, and the exercise meanwhile be found needed and helpful. But faith is in the invisible,—sees Him indeed who is so,—has its ground, its arguments, is not credulity, but has sure evidence, all its own.

2. (*a*) Now we have the picture of the wicked one, the enemy of God and man. Pride and lust characterize him, the tokens of a soul out of the presence of God, but here in distinct and awful rejection of Him. He boasts of his soul's desire, —of having his own way; pursuing it, he refuses all the check of Jehovah's will; he renounces, he scorns Him, is in entire independence: like a "wandering star", he is bound to no orbit, by that very fact indeed showing himself to be in earth-bonds that he knows not, a meteor to be quenched in darkness; safety and permanency are only in the orbit.

He is not only independent of God, he denies Him; but he denies Him in the interest of his own lawless acts. "He will not search out," he says. His plottings, the weaving together of his purposes, are atheistic therefore. His pride and his lusts mutually support each other.

(*b*) Security is the natural outcome of his pride: God's judgments are out of his sight altogether. If faith has to own often that clouds and darkness are about Him, it is in no wise strange that he should refuse all cognizance of One thus removed out of all natural ken. Nay, if God acts most clearly, the very fact that He makes all things serve Him in it still conceals Him amid the multiplicity of instruments. Then the scale in which God weighs things is too spiritual; the balances are "balances of the sanctuary": a careless and callous conscience cannot appreciate them; the handwriting on the wall needs an interpreter, and who knows if it were correctly given?

He knows not God then, and he derides men: "all his adversaries, he puffeth at them." These things do not always go together: it does not follow that he who has emancipated himself from the restraint of conscience is necessarily free from the fear of man. Man is more intelligible, and yet not always more calculable; he is as to tangibility nearer; and the mystery of one's own heart is dark enough to threaten one with the likeness of other hearts to ours. And yet over this also pride can lift the heart; and it is so here. Nay, he of whom this is spoken can look on indefinitely to the future as one not to be subject to the ills that afflict other men,—"from generation to generation one in no calamity."

(*c*) Being thus secure, all that is in his heart comes out: "out of the heart the mouth speaketh"; and "his mouth is full of cursing and deceit and oppression." What is "*under* his tongue," hidden, and yet ready to show itself, is "trouble" for others, "and vanity" in itself. A short description, indeed, but an effective one. If God be displaced it is to make room for man; and what is the man, then, for whom this is to make room?

d (8-10): his ways.
(i.)
(ii.)
(iii.)
e (11): as to God's government.

He sitteth in [t]ambush in the villages:
in secret places doth he [u]slay the innocent;
his eyes lurk after the wretched.
He lieth in wait in secret, like a [v]lion in his thicket:
he lieth in wait to seize the humble;
he seizeth the humble, drawing him into his net.
He croucheth, he boweth down,
and the [w]wretched fall by his strong ones.
He hath said in his heart, the Mighty hath [x]forgotten:
he hideth his face, he hath never seen it.

t *cf.* 1 Sam. 18. 11. Mi. 7. 2.
u *cf.* Rev. 13. 15.
v Ps. 7. 2. Ps. 17. 12.
w *cf.* Deut. 25. 18.
x Ps. 73. 11. Ps. 59. 7.

3 (12-18): faith's realization of God rising up.
a (12, 13): the appeal to the living God.
(i.) because of the righteous.
(ii.) because, too, of the wicked.
b (14): the confidence of faith.
c (15, 16): purification realized.
(i.) from the power of the evil one.

(*Koph.*) [y]Arise, Jehovah! Mighty One, lift thy hand!
[z]forget not the humble!
Why doth the wicked one scorn God?
he hath said in his heart, thou wilt not seek it out.
(*Resh.*) [a]Seen it thou hast: for *thou* beholdest trouble and vexation,
to requite it with thy hand;
the wretched [b]leaveth himself to thee:
thou hast been the helper of the [c]orphan.
(*Schin.*) Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil one:
thou shalt seek out his wickedness till thou find none.

y Ps. 7. 6.
z Ps. 13. 1.
a Prov. 15. 3.
b Ps. 7. 1.
c Ps. 146. 9. *cf.* Jno. 14. 18.

(*d*) So we have now his ways.—a monotony of wickedness which the psalmist, seeking to describe, can only do so by repeating himself in various ways. The figure is that of a wild beast and a beast of prey,—human so far only as there is with it the cunning and forecast of the hunter. Man without God is only such a beast; the spiritual part sunk into the animal only giving to it preternatural potency for evil. This process of degradation a Nebuchadnezzar is witness to; while in the prophet's vision, the imperial powers following him inherit his shame: they are but "four wild beasts."

Even the numerical structure seems in the minor sections to fall through here, which, considering that the alphabetic has already done so, and yet with design, may make us realize design here also,—the *three* verses manifesting what is yet a nameless horror, like the fourth of the imperial beasts in Daniel's vision. (Dan. vii.)

(*e*) One closing comment takes us back to his attitude toward the divine government, which yet has its hold upon him: "he hath said in his heart, The Mighty hath forgotten: He hideth His face; He hath never seen it."

3. (*a*) The alphabet is resumed with *Koph*, and now continues to the end. Let us notice that this letter is 100 in numerical value, the years of Abraham's life before the promise is fulfilled, and to one "as good as dead" Isaac is born. So now it is time for God to arise and act: this consummation of denial and defiance is the index-hand which points to the last possible limit of divine long-suffering. The living God must show Himself. The Mighty One must put forth might. The suffering of the righteous calls for it; and so does the cool contempt of the wicked. Patience will be no longer forbearance, but the aggravation of the evil.

(*b*) Faith holds confidently yet to an All-seeing One, interested as He is observant, sure to interfere. The wretched one, plunged in affliction, yet abandons himself to Him, who has proved Himself the helper of those destitute of natural help. The height of the evil is but the supreme necessity which God must respond to, and with which He directly charges Himself. With all help beside cut off, is not the soul in this condition just this "orphan" to whom He is pledged?

(*c*) Then with the cry comes the flash of recognition: "Break Thou the arm

(ii.) the deliverance.
d (17, 18): the experience of faith.
(i.) strength given.
(ii.) in confidence of coming deliverance.

Jehovah is [d]King for ever and aye:
the nations are [e]perished out of his land.
(*Tau.*) The desire of the humble thou hast [f]heard,
Jehovah:
thou confirmest their heart;—
thou causest thine ear to hearken,—
To [g]judge the orphan and the oppressed,
that frail man of the [h]earth may no more alarm.

d Ps. 29. 10.
e Ps. 9. 5. Ps. 45. 5. *cf.* Ps. 18. 43.
f Ps. 6. 8, 9.
g Ps. 72. 4.
h *ctr.* Ps. 8. 4–8.

of the wicked and the evil one! Thou shalt seek out his wickedness till there is no more to find." And then the glorious accomplishment seems before the sight: "Jehovah is King for ever and aye: the nations are perished out of His land." Purgation is effected, the evil is cast out; the intrusive presence of the nations in the land that is Jehovah's land is found no more. It is only faith still that realizes this, but it is realized. Faith can be as sure as if the thing were done, and while there may be for it at times the struggle upwards through the mists of the valley, there are also the clear air of the mountain-top and the perfect vision.

(*d*) And the soul goes on strengthened on its way. There is an experience of faith, braced and energized by communion with God, which makes already the path to shine with the glow of far-off skies, and lifts up the feet with energy and purpose. So it is now, as the soul sings:—

"The desire of the humble Thou hast heard, Jehovah: Thou confirmest their heart; Thou causest Thine ear to hearken, to judge the orphan and the oppressed, that frail man of the earth"—whose abode the earth is—may no more alarm." Thus with a strain of joy and confidence the tenth psalm ends.

Sec. 2.

There follows now a second series of remnant psalms, their exercises in view of the prevalent evil and power of the enemy. There is not the same ploughing up of the soul or question of relationship to God that we found in the first; for even the complaint of forgetfulness is not the dread of wrath; nay, is in fact almost the opposite of that: for the plea is, Canst Thou forget *me*—Thine own? On this account the connection of the psalms with one another is more difficult to trace; there is not the same process in the soul to be detected which gave each its place in the former case; the eyes of the remnant are more upon their circumstances, less upon themselves. This does not, however, make the psalms less simple to understand individually: they are, on the contrary, quite easy to be read; and orderly connection, too, there surely is; but it is not that of life-development.

We begin, however, at the same point in each series, with faith in an absolute God who governs all, the eleventh psalm being broader and fuller in character than the third, as it is less personal. In the next psalm, the twelfth, we have the words of Jehovah as the resting-place of faith, amid the empty clatter and worse of human tongues. The thirteenth—third of the series—is a cry of distress, Jehovah's face hidden and the enemy prevailing, though with realized blessing in the end. The fourteenth sees the ignorant folly of the oppressor, and moralizes on it, though salvation has not yet come. While the fifteenth, thoroughly Deuteronomic in its character, declares the indispensable moral condition of those who at last dwell with God.

These psalms are all very brief, the longest only of eight verses; they are plainly still introductory: outline-sketches to be filled in at a later time.

PSALM XI.

The first psalm, though but of seven verses, is of varied character, and has five divisions,—is of itself a little pentateuch. Its theme is the sovereignty of God, as faith owns it, His complete control when things are at their worst, and all foundations in appearance gone. Amid the abysmal sea, He is the one thing

SEC. 2. (Ps. xi.–xv.)

In view of the evil and the enemy.

Ps. xi.

[1]PSALM XI.

Jehovah on the throne, and ordering all for blessing.

To the chief musician, [a psalm] of David.

1 (1): Jehovah, the soul's stability.

2 (2, 3): The elements of unrest.

(i.) personal danger.

(ii.) ethical confusion.

3 (4): Jehovah in the heavenly sanctuary.

4 (5): The trial.

IN Jehovah have I taken [h]refuge;
why say ye to my soul, [i]Flee [as] a bird to your mountain?
For lo, the wicked bend the bow,
they fix their arrow upon the string,
to shoot in darkness at the [k]upright of heart.
If the [l]foundations are destroyed,
what can the righteous do?
Jehovah is in his [m]holy temple:
Jehovah—his [n]throne is in heaven;
his eyes [o]behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.
Jehovah [p]trieth the righteous;
but the wicked and lover of violence his soul [q]hateth.

[i] Ps. 7. 1. *cf.* Ps. 16. 1 with Heb. 2. 13. Heb. 12. 1, 2.
[j] *cf.* 1 Sam. 26. 19, 20.
[k] Ps. 7. 3, 4. Ps. 15. 2.
[l] Ps. 82. 5. *cf.* Matt. 24. 6, 7, 21, 29.
[m] Hab. 2. 20. *cf.* Mal. 3. 1–3.
[n] Ps. 103. 19. *cf.* Dan. 4. 25.
[o] Ps. 14. 2. Heb. 4. 13.
[p] *cf.* Gen. 22. 1, etc.
[q] Ps. 5. 5.

that abides; and abiding, bears the soul up and through all surges to the shore. Yet, necessary as this truth is, and blessed as is the assurance of it, there is abundance that will try it in a scene like this, God consenting also, as the psalm says, that it should be tried, that patience may be wrought and have its perfect work: for "tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, a hope that maketh not ashamed"; and if "patience have her perfect work," then are we "perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Thus the psalms that follow find their reason and justification.

1. Naturally we begin with Jehovah as the one sufficient stability of the soul. He the living, the unchanging God, is the sure refuge of the faith that cleaves to Him. Yet because no eye but that of faith discerns this refuge, men may mock and threaten the feebleness which alone they see, and see not the inclosing arms that compass about the feeble one. But he publishes his security, and the grounds of it. It is something of which we never can be deprived, while cleaving to it; and confidence grows in the confession of it. "Why say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain? In Jehovah I have taken refuge."

2. But now we see the elements that breed unrest. They are of two kinds mainly. The first, in such a day as we have seen the psalms look onward to, looms large and grave enough: it is that of personal peril: "for lo, the wicked bend their bow, they fix the arrow upon the string, that they may shoot in the dark at the upright in heart." The danger is there, and yet, just where is uncertain; but the evil grows, and the moral question of this uprise under the government of God becomes the deepest: "if the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?" The path seems lost in this uttermost confusion.

3. But we have the correcting truth. If Jehovah's sanctuary is to be found no more on earth,—and we must remember that it is Israel to whom the earthly sanctuary is the expression of the distinguishing favor enjoyed by them, which marked them as His people,—yet in His heavenly temple He is; and thence no sin of man can drive him. Thence He still rules the earth; and when, because He is quiet, men little deem this, He exercises the most perfect oversight over them all. Left indeed thus, they show fully what they are; and He remains, too, what He is, the throned and Holy One.

4. But He trieth also the *righteous:* just those He loves, and because He loves them, for the sake of what the trial works, in them and through them for His glory. And this may make the wicked, the instruments of this trial, forget or ignore that the "wicked and the lover of violence He hates." Not yet is the day

5 (6, 7): The recompense. (i.) the fruit of righteousness. (ii.) fruit of fellowship.

Upon the wicked he [r]raineth snares,
[s]fire and brimstone and a scorching wind,—
the portion of their cup.
For Jehovah is righteous, [t]loving righteous acts:
the [u]upright shall behold his face.

Ps. xii.

[2]PSALM XII.

Man's lying words contrasted with Jehovah's pure ones.

To the chief musician, upon [v]Sheminith. A psalm of David.

1 (1-4): Self wholly. (i.) The mass one.

SAVE, Jehovah! for the [w]godly hath ceased;
for the faithful are vanished from the children of men.

[r] *ctr.* Ps. 78. 24.
[s] *cf.* Gen. 19. 24-28. *cf.* Ex. 9. 23-26. Rev. 8. 7. Ezek. 38. 22.
[t] Ps. 33. 4, 5.
[u] Ps. 4. 6. Ps. 17. 15. *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 2.
[v] Ps. 6 Title.
[w] Isa. 57. 1. Mi. 7. 1, 2. *cf.* Rev. 14. 13.

of manifestation, when the truth will all come out; but he that will may nevertheless know this now. Conscience alone, if truly listened to, is competent to declare it.

5. But the psalm carries us on to the day of retribution, from its standpoint very near at hand; "upon the wicked He will rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and a scorching wind,—the portion of their cup." The imagery is borrowed from the description of the destruction of Sodom, so solemn a picture of the world's judgment, and referred to by our Lord in connection with His own coming. (Luke xvii. 28-30, 32.) The "snares" are evidently the fire and brimstone themselves, rained down from heaven,* laying hold of men before they are aware of their danger, as with Lot's wife: "while they say, peace and safety, sudden destruction cometh upon them."

On the other hand, as surely as "Jehovah is righteous, loving righteous acts," "the upright shall behold His face." Fellowship here leads on to the fellowship hereafter. Thus the first psalm of this series ends.

PSALM XII.

The second puts in sharp contrast the lying words of men with Jehovah's pure ones, which bring moreover with them the assurance of salvation to the soul. The outlook otherwise is dark enough, and the psalm is in the same low notes (*al sheminith*) as the fourth of the former series (Psalm VI.). It is characteristic of antichristian times that deception should be so marked a feature, and that they should say, "With our *tongues* will we prevail." Not that such words have reference necessarily to the poison of false doctrine; but that, as during an epidemic, other diseases take on more or less the prevailing form, so under the shadow of one great deception every form of deception may be hid. And yet, remembering what for the inspired writer the tongue is, we need not be at much loss for the application of the psalm before us to the world round about us to-day, and indeed take home to ourselves also its warnings.

1. It divides into two equal parts, in the first of which man is the subject, in

* Dawson has shown that the instrument of divine judgment upon Sodom was no doubt a "bitumen or petroleum eruption, similar to those which, on a small scale, have been so destructive in the oil-regions of Canada and the United States of America. They arise from the existence of reservoirs of compressed inflammable gas along with petroleum and water, existing at considerable depths below the surface. When these are penetrated, as by a well or bore-hole, the gas escapes with explosive force, carrying petroleum with it, and when both have been ignited, the petroleum rains down in burning showers, and floats in flames over the ejected water, while a dense smoke towers high into the air, and the inrushing draught may produce a vortex, carrying upward to a still greater height and distributing still more widely the burning material, which is almost inextinguishable, and most destructive to life and to buildings. . . . Now the valley of the Dead Sea is an 'oil-district,' . . . and it is well known that petroleum exudes from the rocks both on the sides and in the bottom of the Dead Sea, and, being hardened by evaporation and oxidation, forms the asphaltum referred to by so many travelers." (Modern Science in Bible Lands, pp. 486-488.) The word used here and in Genesis xix. for "brimstone" may include "any kind of mineral pitch or oil, and possibly sulphur as well." And the "scorching wind" is therefore not the "simoom" of the desert, as generally supposed.

(ii.) false and double-hearted.
(iii.) the judgment of holiness.
(iv.) creature weakness.

They [x]speak falsehood each with his neighbor;
with [y]smoothest lips, with a double heart, they speak.
Jehovah shall [z]cut off all smooth lips,—
the tongue that speaketh great things:
Who have said, With our [a]tongues will we prevail;
our lips are our own:
[b]who is lord over us?

2 (5-8): Jehovah's words of help.
(i.) the promise.
(ii.) the confidence of faith.

Because of the oppression of the afflicted,
because of the [c]sighing of the needy,
now will I arise, saith Jehovah,
I will set [him] in [d]safety at whom they puff.
The words of Jehovah are [e]pure words:
silver [f]tried in the furnace of earth, seven times purified.

x Ps. 4. 2.
y Ps 10. 7. Ps. 28. 3. Jer. 9. 8.
z Ps. 144.7,8. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 8.
a cf. Jude 16. *cf.* Dan. 7.8.
b cf. Ps.10.4. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 8. with 1 Jno. 3. 4.
c cf. Ex.2.23. Ps. 13. 1.
d Ps. 27. 6. Ps. 4. 8. *cf.* Lk.21.17, 18.
e Ps. 19. 8. Ps. 119.140.
f ctr. ver. 3.

the second God is before us. With man, his misery and his evil are, that, fallen away from God, believing in His love and care no more, he is become himself the object of his own self-love and care. Self rules him, subjects him, degrades, corrupts him, turns him from the minister of blessing that he should be into the oppressor and scourge of all creation under him.

Here the mass are one, there is no godly man left, the faithful are gone from among the children of men. Their mouth is filled with falsehood, they have the smoothest of lips, and a double heart. Against all such Jehovah will manifest Himself, and against the tongue that speaks great things.

What is it that they say? According to Delitzsch and others we should read, "To our tongues we will give strength," that is, we will talk as loudly as we please; but such a meaning might, one would think, be more simply conveyed. Holding by the common translation, which the Revised Version retains, there results a possible meaning, which for its folly might be discarded as *im*possible, and which yet may be the meaning here. Nothing can, after all, be too foolish for the lying lips which are the outcome of a deceitful heart, capable of deceiving the very man who is its possessor. Do not men know that they must die? Yet is it not the business of the mass to ignore it, forget it, make the truth untrue? And so the forty-ninth psalm speaks: "Their inward thought is that their houses shall continue forever, and their dwelling-places to all generations; they call the lands after their own names. . . . This their way is their folly; yet their posterity"—or "the men that come after them"—"approve their sayings."

Is not this in effect to say—is it not the real meaning of—"by our words we will prevail,"—"we will have the thing so by mere effrontery"? The untrue shall be true if we pronounce it true?

Doubtless a man would never say this openly; would not proclaim so openly a battle with the fact; would not even frame such a thought in speech. But that is just the desperate deceit of the heart, that it can so prevail over the reason; and the numerical structure may just point to the weakness underlying the boasting of the tongue,—this mere puff of breath, as it is,—*vox et præterea nihil.* And he may be fitly made to say what in fact he would not care to say, who yet in his life makes just this folly his.

Lips and heart here have broken loose from the curb of divine authority: "who is lord over us?" is the cry. What more than a mere puff of breath is this, save for its wickedness?

2. Jehovah's word comes here into swift opposition to all this; yet it is love and pity that move Him to action,—the oppression of the poor, the sighing of the needy. His promise pledges His interference; whereupon faith celebrates, before this comes, the "pure" words of the Lord, unmixed with any alloy of insincerity or untruth,—words that are like silver, the current medium of exchange, completely purified.

(iii.) the actualization.
(iv.) the universal ruin.

Thou, Jehovah, [g]keepest them:
thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.
The wicked [h]walk on every side,
when vileness is exalted among the children of men.

[g] Ps. 121.
[h] Ps. 17. 9, 13.

Ps. xiii.

[3]PSALM XIII.

Brought up from the gates of death.

To the chief musician, a psalm of David.

1 (1, 2): Alone.
(i.) perpetually?
(ii.) conflict.

[i]HOW long wilt thou [j]forget me, Jehovah? perpetually?
how long wilt thou [k]hide thy face from me?
How long shall I take [l]counsel in my soul,
with sorrow in my heart daily?
how long shall my [m]enemy be exalted over me?

[i] Ps. 6. 3, etc.
[j] Ps. 10. 12. Ps. 42. 9. *ctr.* Is. 49. 15, 16.
[k] Ps. 44. 24.
[l] Ps. 39. 3.
[m] Ps. 25. 2.

In fact, this is realized. Jehovah keeps His people, yea, preserves them forever from the generation of the false-hearted. Yet the wicked walk around; and so it must be when "vileness"—what should be shaken out and cast away—is held in a place of honor among men. This is the condition of things now among the people once the special people of Jehovah.

Psalm XIII.

The third psalm of the series is a resurrection psalm, as agrees well with its position. In it the soul goes down into the depths, but only to find renewal of strength, and fuller blessing. For is it not so in the case of any difficulty met with God, and mastered, as, thus met, it *will* be mastered? And thus, as it would seem, upon every dealing of God with us, and in every stage of His new-creative work, the stamp of resurrection will be found. We must face nature's ruin, bury the dead, acquiesce in the setting aside of creature strength entirely, that all power may be ascribed where it belongs—to God.

How interesting, in this respect, to find in each of the six days' work wherein, in Genesis i., we have seen the type of just this new creative work, this same stamp exhibited! On the Sabbath of rest it can be at last omitted. Thus "the evening and the morning" constitute each "day." The day begins with light indeed, but with *evening*-light, destined, as it would seem, only to make haste to die out and disappear, but to have ere long its resurrection "morning." Here, one would say, the sole purpose of the psalm is to affix this stamp: God thus snapping the ties of nature in all that sin has blighted, ending all *creature*—so all *self*—dependence, that all our trust may fasten on Himself. Then, when we make Him all, we find Him all; the *natural* truth, that "in Him we live and move and have our being," becomes a spiritual truth, spiritually discerned and enjoyed. As here, the soul beginning with a groan ends with a song. We have passed through a tunnel of earth to the unveiled glory of heaven.

1. The six verses fall into three couplets, so that the *six* is really a 3 x 2. It is at once a discipline and a lesson in mastery that we have in them. The cry here is of one desolate indeed, although, as has been noticed, conscience is not accusing as in the sixth psalm. The psalmist cries a strange cry, bred at once of intimacy and estrangement, that Jehovah—the Unchanging—has forgotten! Then will His forgetfulness now not change? Will it be perpetual? Who, indeed, can read such a riddle as this? Clouds have hid the sun, but who would then identify the sun and the cloud? The cloud passes, but the sun abides.

Simple, all this,—to see and say as to another! With the chill and the shadow upon us, is it always so easy? "Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands; thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees: but now it is come upon *thee*,

2 (3, 4): The prayer. (i.) for light. (ii.) in view of the enemy.

Consider—answer me, Jehovah my God:
lighten mine eyes lest I [n]sleep—death;—
Lest mine enemy say, I have [o]prevailed against him,
[and] mine adversaries exult that I am moved!

n Ps. 6. 5.
o Ps. 35. 19. Ps. 38. 16.

and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled." (Job iv. 3-5.) So it is indeed with more than Job: at the critical moment, when demand is made upon us to show strength, there is naught but weakness; the arguments that we ourselves have used with others stand where they did, but they avail not; they have not been refuted, but they do not comfort us. Ah, we need more than argument: the living strength of the God of strength alone suffices in the day of personal need; and a terrible thing it is, perhaps, then to realize how much of the energy that has carried us on has not been that!

Argument? What use in argument, when a soul says, God has forgotten! He used to speak to me, He used to bless me, I used to find Him when I sought; but now! And here is one who has known the favor of Jehovah, and whose prayer has entered into His ears, telling Him he is not the same; asking, Will He remember me no more?

So comes the weary "taking counsel," the strife of thought, of little use indeed, if God be the changeable being we have made Him. All the counsel in our hearts cannot lift care indeed, if God be no more God; "if," as Luther's wife asked him, "God were dead." But He is not, or we would not be at His feet, even to groan out these faithless fears.

2. And at His feet the soul grows bolder: "Consider,—answer me, Jehovah, my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep—death." Aye, the despair of all else shows that faith is about to revive; despair of all else absolutely makes God the one grand resource. We grasp with one hand some unbreakable holdfast, and with the other some poor weed or fragile thread that could not support one for a moment; and then, when this has snapped, we cry, "Oh, the holdfast has given way," when all that is needed is to put *both* hands upon it! This is now the lesson; and immediately the soul gets the right argument, not with itself but with God: "Lighten mine eyes," it says: "Lord, Thou knowest, Thou art the light of them: yea, the light of life itself; if Thou art not with me, it is only death."

This is the argument; this is the thicket that caught for us the horns of the ram of sacrifice. (Gen. xxii. 13.) Our feebleness laid hold of the unique power of Christ—power that only was in Him—to bring Him in for us. He *had* the power, and there was none else, and He knew it: "He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore His arm brought salvation to Him." (Isa. lix. 16.) What an argument to infinite Love to tell Him, if truthfully we can, "Lord, Thou art my one necessity: the light of these poor eyes, the light in which alone we see light; the Life without whom there is only, only death!" This is a prayer taught by the Holy Ghost Himself,—by Him who "maketh intercession for the saints according to God." (Rom. viii. 27, Gk.) We put both arms round Him when we say so; and it is a prayer so possible for us all, a child's prayer,—an infant's,—never to be refused by the tender pity of God.

He is the Light and He is the Life: simple truths indeed, yet how needful to remember. The wise of this world, with all the subtlety of human intellect, can never succeed in anything but in deceiving themselves and all that trust in them. Christ alone is wisdom, what can be ever rightly counted such,—true wisdom, because in it alone are found "righteousness and sanctification and redemption." (1 Cor. i. 30, Gk.) * Men are lost, and must come to God not as philosophers but as sinners. All cannot be the first; the last of these all *are*.

* Almost all versions have obscured the meaning here: the words should read, "who is made unto us wisdom from God: righteousness as well as sanctification and redemption." The Revised Version has in the margin "*both* righteousness and sanctification and redemption,"—a right meaning, in bad English.

3 (5, 6): The realization.
(i.) the truth of God.
(ii.) the help of God.

But I have [p] trusted in thy mercy;
my heart shall exult in thy [q] salvation.
I will sing unto Jehovah,
for he hath dealt [r] bountifully with me.

[p] Ps. 11. 1, etc.
[q] cf. Ps. 21. 1.
[r] cf. Ps. 116. 7.

Ps. xiv.

[s] PSALM XIV.

The universality of evil and its folly: God's experience of man.

To the chief musician, [a psalm] of David.

(i.) the multitude one.

THE [s] fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.
They have corrupted themselves, they have done abominable works:
there is [t] none that doeth good.

[s] Ps. 53. 1. Ps. 10. 4. cf. Lk. 12. 20.
[t] Rom. 3. 10.

Yet I do not say how deep the psalmist goes here. There may be more in his words than realized by himself. Death physical had not lost its shadow yet for the saint; for He had not come who has "abolished" it. The pressure of the enemy is felt all through these experiences, though by it also God is working blessing as in all things: "He maketh all things work together for good to those that love Him." Here the psalmist pleads that the enemy may not triumph, nor his adversaries be able to exult in his being moved.

3. The third couplet gives the resurrection from the depths. First, faith finds the solid ground under its feet. It has not an elaborate argument, but a very simple one: "I have trusted in His mercy, therefore deliverance shall come!" Perhaps a little more than that: "I have trusted in His mercy: so then I will be glad at once, for deliverance is sure!" It is good to be able to honor Him thus *before* it comes, and not to be taken by surprise by it. Sorrowful, even in the deliverance itself, never to have given Him credit for it beforehand!

Then the last verse celebrates (I think) the actual deliverance which surely follows. And now in proportion to the distress is the liveliness of the joy. The sigh becomes a song. There are no details all the way through, that we may have before us just the fact which the psalm emphasizes, that God is the God of resurrection, and that so, weaned from all self-trust, He Himself becomes the one sufficiency,— the *all*-sufficiency of the believing soul.

Psalm XIV.

The distress is over: it does not revive. Is it not always true that of what is thoroughly gone through with God, the result abides: true victories are permanent ones? And good reason: for the victory is really found in the judgment and elimination of that confidence in false trusts which leaves us instead with God our confidence, with a strength that the hour of need but justifies and manifests. Faith, faith, faith: that is the lesson of lessons; that is the effectual worker, and in every part of the Christian life and walk.

The soul can now, in peace as to itself, contemplate its surroundings; the enemy, once so formidable, becomes now as weak and foolish as once he seemed strong and prosperous. Jehovah has appeared, is seen to be with the generation of the righteous, and that at once changes everything with regard to their persecutor, who is only dashing himself against the rock. A terrible scene indeed it is to contemplate, and man is seen with the "madness in his heart" of which the preacher speaks. The floods are abroad, and the "floods lift up their waves," but in vain necessarily: they break themselves against the limit God has affixed. God Himself has taken man's measure, and what is he? But a fool, that knows not His maker.

There are seven verses, a real septenary of 4 + 3; the first four being the testing of man; the last three the manifestation of God,— and this very plainly marked. The estimate is complete, as it is brief. The verdict is easily reached, soon uttered. It is a judgment from which no appeal is possible.

(i.) These are emphatically the evil days, and the moral unity of the mass,

(ii.) Jehovah Himself the witness.
Jehovah [u]looked down from heaven upon the children of men,
to see if any one understood, [or] was [v]seeking after God.

(iii.) the result.
All of them have turned [w]aside;
they have together become corrupt:
none doeth good, no, not one.

(iv.) its folly.
Have all the workers of vanity no knowledge?
[x]eating up my people, as if they ate bread?
they have not [y]called on Jehovah.

(v.) God with the righteous.
There were they in [z]great fear,
for God is with the generation of the righteous.

[u] Ps. 33. 13, 14. *cf.* Gen. 18. 20, 21.
[v] *ctr.* Lk. 15. 3–7.
[w] Rom. 3. 11, 12.
[x] Ps. 27. 2, Mi. 3. 3.
[y] *cf.* Gen. 4. 26.
[z] *cf.* 2 Ki. 7. 6, 7.

already seen in the twelfth psalm, is still more solemnly asserted. The fool who says in his heart there is no God, is not an exception to the rest, though it be true that there will be a great leader in this direction, one who "opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped." (2 Thess. ii. 4.) But here the "fool" of the first sentence becomes a multitude in the very next, who "have corrupted themselves, have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good." This is, indeed, but what man away from God naturally comes to; for God is the true life of man; and, as the body apart from the soul which is *its* life, corrupts, so does the soul, if it be apart from God. There cannot be exception here; no law is surer than is this: "there is *none* that doeth good."

(ii.) But Jehovah Himself will give His testimony. Knowing perfectly all hearts beforehand, He is yet not content to pronounce, save from actual experience. Looking down from heaven, He considers every soul of man among the children of Adam, to see if there is any one who truly understands,—who, aroused by the want and misery of his condition, seeks after Him whom men's sins have shut off from them.

(iii.) Alas, no! they have not sought nor cared: they have turned aside; they have gone after their lusts; none doeth good, no, not one. This the apostle long afterwards applies as a general truth, condemning absolutely the whole world. What the grace of God does is another matter. Apart from this there is a monotony of evil, one generation following another, only to add their own sins to their fathers'. This is the result then, God Himself being witness, certifying it from actual inspection of every individual among men.

We may gather this comfort, even from so terrible a condition, that if there be one who *does* understand enough even to *seek* after God, God's grace has wrought, He Himself has been the first seeker; and what an encouragement this for him who yet has not found, but only "seeketh." We can realize then how it must be that, as the Lord has said, "*every one* that seeketh findeth." Even amid the darkness, One to whom there *is* no darkness is on the way to find him whom by need and famine He has sought before.

(iv.) But the workers of vanity, have they no knowledge, then? They would eat up God's people just as they eat bread: in every respect like beasts, for these, too, "call not on Jehovah." It is man's privilege to know God; not knowing Him, he has *no* right human "knowledge." "Workers of vanity," therefore, they assuredly will be. The whole description is of a piece: the whole thing goes together. But the human beast here shows his fallen condition by his antipathies: he is *against* God and His people, as we see; he is such a beast as the serpent was when the devil got into him. Alas, that is really the case, that he has admitted the devil.

(v.) With the fifth verse, as already said, God Himself comes into the scene; and man is with Him, "God is with the generation of the righteous." That is the real fear that comes upon the persecutor, the shadow of his approaching doom. These weak, despised people, how often have they, just by the light that shone out of them and around them, thrown a panic into the host of their adver-

(vi.) His limit.

Ye would put to [a]shame the counsel of the humble;
but Jehovah is his [b]refuge.

(vii.) the complete end.

Oh that Israel's [c]salvation were come out of Zion!
when Jehovah bringeth back the [d]captivity of his people,
Jacob shall [e]exult, Israel shall be glad.

[a] *cf.* Ps. 11. 1.
[b] Ps. 46. 1, 2.
[c] Ps. 53. 6. *cf.* Rom. 11. 26, 27.
[d] Ps. 126. 1–3.
[e] Ps. 85. 1–3.

Ps. xv.

[5]PSALM XV.

The character of those who dwell with God.

A psalm of David.

1 (1): The question of congruity.

JEHOVAH, [f]who shall sojourn in thy tent?
who shall abide in thy [g]holy hill?

[f] Ps. 24. 3–5. *cf.* Ps. 27. 4, 5.
[g] Ps. 2. 6.

saries! It is in effect what Peter says of the Christian: "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you." (1 Pet. iv. 14.) When Jehovah looked out from the fleeing Israelites upon the ranks of the pursuing Egyptians, He troubled the host of the Egyptians; and from the Red Sea down through the long march of history, this has been many times repeated. Without weapon lifted or hostile array, the people of God have forced upon the mightiest the conviction, "The Lord fighteth for them." Well may they be afraid then! "They that be with us are more than they that be with them." (2 Kings vi. 16.)

(vi.) Here, then, is the enemy's limit. "Ye would put to shame the counsel of the humble; but Jehovah is his refuge." "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people." (Ps. cxxv. 2.) Blessed security! He who gave His life for the flock is with them, now "in the power of an endless life." And He says Himself, "Because I live, ye shall live also." (John xiv. 19.)

(vii.) But the psalm ends with the salvation of Israel only in sight. It comes out of Zion, by the Deliverer there to come, the King once rejected, then to be greeted with the homage of a willing people. Suddenly this will be accomplished, and then their captivity will be turned as in a moment! "Jacob shall exult, Israel shall be glad."

Psalm XV.

The deuteronomic character of the fifth psalm will not be questioned. In it we have no longer experiences, but a moral conclusion,—the character asked and given of those who are to dwell with God. Its connection with the other psalms of this series proves, in opposition to the thought of many, that it is not Christ Himself who is before us in it, but the remnant of Israel in the latter day, with whom already we have seen Jehovah taking part. "God is with the generation of the righteous," as the last psalm has declared; and here we find, in necessary harmony with this, that they are to be with Him. It is, of course, true that their righteousness is defective, and that on the ground of it they could in no wise stand before God; but nothing is said here of the ground of acceptance, and though it be only grace that could accept them, yet they have none the less a positive righteousness of their own which is the work of the Spirit in them, and which He owns as such. Thus it is, then, that they are characterized here.

1. The psalm consists of a question and answer which clearly divide the five verses into two parts. This the numerical structure very distinctly shows. Let any who doubt its reality try the very simple experiment of dividing the psalm differently, and so as to preserve even the show of numerical significance. It seems impossible to do this.

In David's reign the ark abode in a tent on Zion, but this is here only the veil through which we look forward to the future. The "tent" in this way, and the thought of sojourn in it, do not imply anything temporary, but must be viewed as paralleled by that of *abiding* in God's holy hill. So rightly argues Delitzsch.

2 (2-5): The answer.

(i.) the righteous.

(ii.) doing no evil.

(iii.) before God.

(iv.) tested by opportunity.

He who walketh in [h] integrity, and doeth righteousness,
and speaketh the [i] truth with his heart;
Who [j] gaddeth not about with his tongue,
who doeth not ill to his companion,
who taketh up no [k] reproach against his neighbor.
In his own eyes he is despicable, is contemned;
but he [l] honoreth them that fear Jehovah;
he [m] sweareth to his own hurt, [but] changeth not.
He putteth not out his money to [n] usury,
and taketh no [o] bribe against the innocent:
he that doeth these things shall never be [p] moved.

h Ps. 11. 2, 7. Ps. 37. 37. Ps. 97 11.
i Zech. 8. 16.
j Lev. 19. 16. 1 Tim. 5.13.
k cf. Ps. 69.7. 9, 10.
l cf. Ps. 16.3.
m Nu. 30. 2.
n Deut. 23. 19, 20. Neh.5.7,10. Ezek. 18.8.
o Deut. 27. 25. Matt.26.15.
p Ps. 62. 2. cf. Ps. 16.8.

Each expression supplies something to the full thought. The grace of the wilderness-journey shines out in the first; and God's dwelling among His creatures must in one sense be ever but a tent, though the "abiding" takes away the fear that, after all, He may depart again.

The question is plainly a question of congruity. Let God's grace be all that He has shown it to be, yet He cannot dwell with those who are alien to His nature. Grace itself can only avail to bring us nigh to God by bringing into His likeness also those it brings nigh. Thank God that it really does this, and we have now the character of those who thus are fitted by grace to dwell with Him.

2. The answer has, brief as it is, four parts, the first of these being necessarily that integrity of heart which manifests itself in the walk and ways, the doing of righteousness, the speaking of truth with the heart. These three things are plainly but manifestations of the same spirit governing the whole practical life.

The first thing is righteousness then, which must be the basis of all else. The second is love, for, as the apostle says, "love worketh no ill to his neighbor." That is almost in words what we have here; and to this it is added, "who taketh not up a reproach"—the reproach of another—"against his neighbor." The first thing here, "who gaddeth not about with his tongue," is in our common version "backbiteth not"; and the connection, at least, with what follows, is evident.

The *third* part of this description shows us a soul in the presence of God; and here the translation given by Delitzsch seems preferable to our common version or the revised. The sign of a soul before God Job illustrates for us in this way, though the best man of his day on earth; and the antithesis, as Delitzsch remarks, is well preserved with the following clause, "he honoreth those that fear Jehovah." How beautiful this spirit of self-judgment, along with the honor given to another for the very thing that marks himself! Then if he vows to the Lord to his loss, yet he cannot go back or change it.

Finally, he is tested by the opportunity to make gain of his neighbor's poverty, and refuses it: usury was absolutely forbidden as between Hebrew and Hebrew; and he rejects the ready bribe to pervert justice. This completes the picture of the perfect Israelite. "He that doeth these things shall never be moved."

Subd. 3.

The third subdivision of the first book contains by far the largest portion of it, twenty-six psalms, and these also larger and more various, on the whole, than those preceding it. When we consider its subject, this is not to be wondered at. We are led in them into the very heart of the book, that being in reality the heart of Christ Himself, which is here unveiled for us in some sense as it scarcely is in the New Testament even. The twenty-second psalm is an illustration of this. The Spirit of Christ that spake in David is indeed here most manifestly declared.

The quotation from Colossians, which I have taken as expressing the theme of this subdivision, seems quite apt to do this. We have not, indeed, in this part of the Psalms the express declaration of Christ's deity, which we *do* have, for

example, in the hundred and second. Yet we have had already, in the second, His divine sonship as born into the world; and we have here, in this glorious Person, God brought nigh to man and ministry to his need in such sort as only divine fullness can explain. And this goes on, as we see, to atonement and its results,— to the complete character of it as sin-offering and burnt-offering both, with iniquity forgiven and sin covered, and the glorious hiding-place of the sinner in God Himself. (Ps. xxii., xl., xxxii.) In the application of this blessed work we of course stop short of the full Christian position, and this will be plain as we go through what is here; but in the revelation of Christ personally, in the wonder of that unique humanity which the New Testament shows us in actual fulfillment in the living Jesus, we shall find what in all Scripture seems not transcended, and in the mystery of the cross itself. May we realize fully, as we take it up, that it is "the mystery of *godliness*"; and find our hearts afresh warmed, aroused, energized, inspired by it. May He who has written it unfold and use it for our blessing and His praise!

Sec. 1.

The structure of the third subdivision is markedly parallel to that of the first (Ps. i.–viii.). It begins with a Messianic section, which is followed by one giving the exercises and experiences of faith, in a latter-day remnant of Israel specifically, though susceptible of the widest application to believers generally. Finally it closes with a still briefer Messianic section. Thus we begin and end with Christ, as God does; while between come in a multitude of human thoughts, feelings, and experiences, some true and good, some of a very mixed nature, but which in the end find Christ once more as the goal they lead to and their answer and rest.

The first section here consists of nine psalms, a number which we have found generally — which is perhaps *always* — a 3 x 3, the divine number intensified. So we find it here. The whole section speaks of Christ as the source of blessing to His people, giving in fact nearly the entire theme of the subdivision, only two Messianic psalms remaining for the close.

Series 1.

The first series, therefore, is of three psalms only: "Christ identifying Himself with the people, and identified with them by God." This is plainly the key of all that follows, although as yet we have not atonement, which is its necessary outcome. The principle is announced in the very beginning of the next (the sixteenth) psalm, and it is gradually developed in the succeeding ones.

PSALM XVI.

The first psalm here gives us Christ as the obedient One on earth. That He is Himself the speaker we may see from the tenth verse, which exclusively applies to Him. He alone is that "holy" or "pious one" who, as such, could not "see corruption" in the grave. So Peter conclusively argues, and he who knows Christ should recognize the features of his Beloved all through the psalm. The fourth verse is a difficulty, no doubt, although idolatry in its various forms was around the Lord, above all in His Galilean ministry. Galilee was then "Galilee of the Gentiles," and Israel too was far from clear. But the background also seems always that of the last days, or at least these are in prospect; and thus their peculiar features — for Israel will fall again into idolatry in the last days — are specialized accordingly. Perspective in the prophets is often greatly foreshortened; but this feature was not absent during the Lord's sojourn in Israel.

Considering the psalm as a whole, a brief glance will show how fully Christ is told out here. The psalm has five divisions,— is therefore a little pentateuch: for the Pentateuch in the new light of Christianity covers, as we know, the whole of man's spiritual life here, a divine "pilgrim's progress"; and in this case we have the One perfect pilgrim seen all through.

First, in one verse, you have the character of His whole life,— so strange for Him indeed, if we consider what He was; and yet on that very account brought

SUBD. 3. (Psalms xvi.–xli.)

"*In Him all the fullness was pleased to dwell, and by Him to reconcile.*"

SEC. 1. (Ps. xvi.–xxiv.)

Christ the Source of Blessing.

SERIES 1. (Psalms xvi.–xviii.)

Christ identifying Himself with the people, and identified with them by God.

Ps. xvi.

[1]PSALM XVI.

The all-Obedient One.

[q] Michtam of David.

1 (1): Power only in God.

PRESERVE me, O Mighty! *
for in thee have I taken [r]refuge.

* *El*, God, but also "power, strength."

q Ps. 56, 57, 58, 59, 60 Titles.
r Heb. 2. 13. Heb. 12. 2.

into prominence here. His life a life of dependence, a life of faith, Himself "Leader and Finisher of faith." "Preserve me, O God! for in Thee do I put my trust."

Then, two verses show Him taking distinctly His place, not as God in divine supremacy, but as Man with men, and for men,—for the saints, in whom is all His delight.

Next, three verses proclaim Jehovah Himself His portion; His lot therefore being maintained by Him in pleasant places.

Fourthly, two verses speak of Him as in His path, content to be led, a learner, taught of divine wisdom, the object before Him being only God; and thus of the unfaltering steadfastness ever of His steps.

While, lastly, three verses trace this path to its end in glory; a way of life found through death itself into the presence of God — the pleasures at His right hand for evermore.

The Lord enable us with wisdom and with reverence to look at these things more in detail; and may our "meditation of Him be sweet" indeed.

This psalm is the first with the inscription "Michtam"—"Michtam of David." For this there are three different meanings given, the common one being the marginal one, "a golden psalm"; but some say, "a hidden" one, a psalm with a hidden meaning; and some say "engraved," so as not to pass away. Delitzsch gives "a psalm with pithy sayings," an "epigram." There are five others similarly inscribed, lvi.–lx., but of very different character from the present, to which one might conceive either of the first meanings being appropriate; but they add nothing that one can realize as of value to the understanding of the psalm.

1. If the sixteenth psalm be pentateuchal, the comparison with the first pentateuch should have interest for us. The theme of the first book, Genesis, is *life*, and that not simply of fallen and ruined, but much more of restored and renewed man. Of this not only the typical side of the six days, but also those biographies of which it is so largely composed, very plainly speak. This new life, as developed in a world departed from God and under death, manifests itself in a practical life of *faith*, whose springs and resources are in the unseen things, which are, in contrast with the seen, the things eternal.

In us, because fallen, life begins with a new birth; and where it exists, it is found in contrast with another principle within us, Cain-like, the elder born. The "works of the flesh," too, alas, are found disfiguring, how much, the life of faith. We are now to contemplate the perfection of One in whom nature was never fallen, in whom there was no principle of evil, and upon whom (after thirty years passed in the world) the Father could set the seal of perfect approbation. There is no dark preface to His spiritual history; and yet as truly as—

2 (2, 3): Taking the inferior place for man's salvation. (i.) the obedient one.

I have said unto Jehovah, *Thou art my Lord*;

s *cf.* Phil. 2. 5-8.

* Adonai, which is the ordinary word for "Lord" when a title of God, but which is a plural form, just like that in Psalm viii, but with the suffix of the first person singular; and so I have translated it, as does the common version.

more truly than — with any of us, His life was a life of faith. Hard as it is (just because of what we know Him to be) to realize this, Scripture assures us of it in the fullest way. The epistle to the Hebrews, in giving the brotherhood of the sanctified to Him by whom they are sanctified, brings forward as applying to Him, a text exactly similar to the one before us: "I will put my trust in Him." (Heb. ii. 13). And again, in a passage to which we have referred, asserts Him to be the "author"— rather "leader"—"and finisher of faith," (Heb. xii. 2), the One who in His own Person completed the whole course of it. The glory of His Godhead must not, therefore, obscure for us the truth and perfection of His manhood. He is the One of whom it could be said, "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given," while at the very same time "His name" was to be called "the Mighty God." (Isa. ix. 6.) And the gospel of Luke declares Him as a child to have *grown in wisdom* as in stature. How impossible for any uninspired writer to have given us such an account of Him who is "God over all, blessed forever"! But God is earnest to have us know the full grace thus expressed. "Descended into the lower parts of the earth" to reach us, He is seeking intimacy. He is assuring us of His ability to sympathize with us in every sinless human experience, "in all things tempted like as we are, sin apart." (Heb. iv. 15.)

This, too, is His perfection, which could not be manifest in the same way, if not subject to real and full trial. To explain or reconcile it with His Godhead, we may be quite unable: we are not called to do it. The blessed truth we need, and can accept, reverently remembering that "no one knoweth the Son, but the Father." (Matt. xi. 27.) The depths of His love are revealed in the abysses of His humiliation; and here we find our present satisfaction and our joy forever. We must, not for a moment, suffer ourselves to be deprived of it; we must not allow its reality to be dimmed.

"Preserve me, O Mighty: for in Thee have I taken refuge," is the language of One as absolutely in need of God, and hanging upon Him, as any one whosoever. He is in man's world, such as sin has made it, not to hide Himself in any wise from its sorrows, but to know them all. Power may be in His hand, and manifested without stint in behalf of others; but for Himself He has none, will use none: to satisfy the hunger of forty days He will not make for Himself the bread which the need of others shall gain from Him without seeking. Conscious of the bleakness and barrenness of the scene into which he has come, "in Thee," He says, "I have taken refuge." The "dove in the clefts of the rock" is not *our* emblem only; it was His in days of keen distress when, "though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things that He suffered," (Heb. v. 8);— learned, as a new thing for Him, what obedience was.

Precious assurance for us! Christ the very pattern of faith in its every character, in every circumstance of trial: feeling all, indeed, with His capacity for feeling, where was no callousness, or dullness, or incompetence of any kind. With this, then, the "golden" sixteenth psalm begins.

2. In the next two verses the speaker declares Jehovah to be His Lord. He to whom obedience was a strange thing takes expressly the place of it. *We* had swerved from the path, even where it began, in Eden, as soon as put on it: had turned every one to his own way, as if it were well proved that our wisdom was more than God's, and as if we owed Him nothing who created us. He, the Creator, comes therefore now Himself to take up and prove the path of His own ordinance,—not as He had ordained it, however, but far otherwise; amid all to show us that it was still no worse than He was content to walk in;—to show how for *Him* it could be meat and drink to do His Father's will: to approve and vindicate it at His own cost, when it cost Him all.

(ii.) in goodness to men.

my [t]goodness [extendeth] not to thee.*
[It is] for the [u]saints that are upon the earth,
and the [v]excellent, in whom is all my delight.

t *cf.* Heb. 2. 16. *cf.* Heb. 5. 8.
u Ps. 30. 4. Ps. 79. 2.
v *cf.* Luke 1. 5, 6. *cf.* Lk. 2. 25-38 with Matt. 3. 13-15.

* This and the following verse are very variously translated. The knowledge of what is in the mind of the Spirit is of more value than mere critical acumen. If we see David only or principally, the difficulty of consistent rendering is very great, (as see Moll in Lange's Commentary, who even denies *tobhathi* to be possibly moral goodness.) The translation here follows the common version, which the revision impoverishes into "I have no good beyond thee"; but that is found, and more strikingly expressed in the fifth verse. The next verse also keeps near to the common version. The "I have said," which seems allowable, and adopted by most to-day, cannot be connected with "to the saints," as many suggest, because the construct form *addirei*, "the excellent," requires "in whom" rather than "in them." And the sense would be again greatly impoverished.

"Lo, I come to do Thy will, O my God," was the one purpose of His heart on earth. *We* allow ourselves many objects. We shrink from the intolerable thought of an absolute sovereign will with a claim upon us at all times, and one strictly defined path from which there is to be no wandering. But God revealed as He is now revealed makes that sovereignty the joy of a soul that knows that His will can only be according to His nature. For us, love, able to show itself as that, characterizes all His ways with us. But what was it for Him who had (as we have not) to meet the prior demands of righteousness upon us, that love might be *free* to show itself toward us? *His* path was not that which the Father's love to *Him* would have dictated. Would not a man "spare his own son that serveth him"? But *He* "spared *not* His Son, but delivered Him up for us all." How wondrous a Leader have we, then, in the path of obedience, who came expressly to fulfill this: "by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all"! (Heb. x. 10.)

Thus He says now to Jehovah, "my goodness extendeth not to Thee,"—words which are explained by that which follows: "it is for the saints that are upon the earth and the excellent." That is, it is not to profit me with Thee: it is, in fact, the expression of that divine goodness, the "love" that "seeketh not its own," but the blessing of others; and this, while the Speaker takes His place distinctly as the Servant of Jehovah, to do His will. Here, evidently, then, is the keynote of all that follows: how important that we should realize its meaning!

No doubt it will be objected that David could not have used the words intelligently in this way. But he did speak of the resurrection of Christ in the tenth verse, as is plain, and as Peter bore witness to the Jews in his day (Acts ii. 30, 31), and there there can be no plea of any typical fulfillment or experience of David himself at all. The prophets spoke better than they knew, and did not always understand what they foretold, as the same Peter insists (1 Pet. i. 11, 12). Therefore to limit things to David's intelligence is not intelligent, even if we knew (as we do not know) just how much that was.

Christ alone, then, could be the real Speaker here; and thus moved by Divine love toward men, He does not take the place before God to which His perfection would entitle Him. It is not to avail for Him, to give Him the place due to His absolute obedience: otherwise the death of the cross—death in any way—could never have been His portion. This obedience of His—this goodness manifested in obedience—was for the saints, the excellent of the earth, in whom was His delight. For this it must be "obedience unto death,"—going as far as that. (Phil. ii. 8.) He must empty himself of all,—sell all that He hath, if He would have what to Him is "treasure." (Matt. xiii. 44.)

Thus He dignifies His poor people with such titles as the "saints, the excellent." Nothing but grace in Him could account them so. Not that there is not in them true spiritual worth and moral beauty: they surely are, they must be, what He calls them. Yes; *but they are made so by His call.* And His heart looks on to

3 (4-6]: Jehovah his portion.
(i.) to the exclusion of all others.
(ii.) his dependence and support.

Their sorrows shall be multiplied who run after [w] another:
their drink-offerings of blood will [z] I not offer,
nor take their names upon my lips.
Jehovah is the measure of my [y] portion and my [z] cup;
thou maintainest my lot.

[w] *cf.* Is. 42. 17. *cf.* Rev. 13. 14, 15.
[x] *cf.* Matt.4. 8-10.
[y] *cf.* Gen. 15. 1. *cf.* Deut. 18. 2.
[z] *cf.* Jno. 6. 38; *cf.* Lk. 22. 42; *cf.* Lam. 3. 24.

the time of perfect consummation, when the glory of His workmanship shall be seen in them. "According to the time shall it be said of Jacob and of Israel, What has God wrought!" Thus shall we be not only, as Jacobs, "to the praise of the glory of His *grace*," but as Israels also, "to the praise of His glory," (Eph. i. 6, 12), which then shall be seen upon us.

Thus, then, the Lord descends to a path which displays His love to His own, and in which His personal claim on God is given up, that we might *have* claim. These two verses, therefore, give fittingly the Exodus section of this psalm,—which, as applied to Him, exhibits, not redemption, but the Redeemer. Not yet, indeed, is it seen how low His grace must stoop: the twenty-second psalm, for the first time, fully discloses that. Here it is the personal love which puts Him upon the path which, to accomplish such a purpose, cannot end but with the Cross.

3. Now comes the Leviticus section, which shows us what God is to this perfect man. He is His all: most beautifully told out in the words, "the *measure* of My portion and of My cup." As it was said of the Levites, "The Lord is their inheritance," so Christ is seen here as the true Levite.

But first we have, what has been objected as fatal to any Messianic interpretation of the psalms, the emphatic denunciation of those who "run after another" god. When we consider Israel's history, it is not to be wondered that what is emphasized as the sin of the legal dispensation, Jehovah's controversy with His people, even from the deliverance out of Egypt until their captivity in Babylon, should be denounced by the lips of Messiah. To say that in the days of the Herods and of heathen governors, the land swarming with the heathen, this evil was wholly extinguished even in Israel, so that it should be inappropriate for Him to utter His abhorrence of it, would surely be to go beyond the proof. Nor was the Lord's prophecy of an "abomination of desolation, standing in the holy place," fulfilled by the idolatrous ensigns of the Romans after the capture of the city, but looks forward to a form of idolatry yet to be found in the midst of Israel, in days preceding, by a short time only, His coming again. (Matt. xxiv.) Why, then, such a warning as this should be unsuitable to a Messianic standpoint it would be difficult to say.

To the law which prohibited all other gods, not only does His full heart respond; but he declares Jehovah to be His entire portion,—the *measure* of it,—its whole content. But who, then, can measure this? It is a measure immeasurable, leaving room for nothing beyond, nothing more to be added to it.

"My portion and my cup:" what is the difference? My portion is what belongs to me,—what is mine, whether or not I enjoy it. My cup is what I actually appropriate, or make my own. Eating and drinking are significant of actual participation and enjoyment. Many a person has in this world a portion which he *cannot* enjoy; and many a one has a portion which (through moral perversity, it may be,) he *does* not enjoy. With the Lord, indeed, His portion and His joy were one: Jehovah was the measure of both. He *had* nothing beside; He *wanted* nothing beside. These two things should be found, through grace, in the Christian also. For all it is true, that God is the measure of our portion,—we have no other. Oh, that it were equally true that He was the measure of our cup,—of our enjoyment!

How strange and sorrowful that for us both should not be realized! How wonderful that we should seek elsewhere what cannot be found, while we leave unexplored the glories of an inheritance which is actually our own. We covet

(iii.) a glorious inheritance.
4 (7, 8): In the path.
(i.) the source of truth.

The [a]lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places:
yea, fair is [my] [b]inheritance to me.
I bless Jehovah who [c]giveth me counsel:
yea, by [d]night my reins instruct me.

a *cf.* Heb. 12. 3 with Luke 2. 49.
b *cf.* Matt. 4. 4.
c *cf.* Is. 50. 4, 5.
d *cf.* Ps. 40. 8.

a wilderness, while we neglect a paradise. "My people have committed two evils," says the Lord Himself; "they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water, and they have hewn out to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, which can hold no water." (Jer. ii. 13.)

And this is the reason why, when we turn to God, and would fain comfort ourselves in Him, we do not find the comfort. Our portion does not yield us for our cup. Would we wonder if we saw an Israelite returning from the worship of Baal refused acceptance at Jehovah's altar? "Covetousness is idolatry," says the apostle. But what is covetousness? It is just the craving of a heart unsatisfied with its portion, for which the thing sought becomes the end that governs it: their lust, as you may see in many a heathen deity, becomes their god. "Their god is their belly"—the craving part—says the apostle again, "who mind earthly things." (Phil. iii. 19.)

And "the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." So here the voice of our blessed Forerunner: "Thou maintainest my lot." It is a sure abiding possession that does not leave the heart to unrest. And how blessed a portion! "The lines are fallen unto Me in pleasant places: yea, my inheritance is fair to Me." Yet it is the Son of God down here in a fallen world, who says this: at the same time a man of sorrows because of what the world was. And for us, be the wilderness what it may, God surely is undiminished by it. Yea, in the wilderness were wrought those miracles which made God known as a living reality. Where else did the manna fall morning by morning? Not even in Canaan, when they entered there! And where else did the pillar of cloud and fire, changing its aspect for their need, go before them ever in the way, to find the path for them? Child of God, is it an evil path in which the Lord leads *thee*, and where these wonders are but signs for thee of deeper realities?

4. But the wilderness path itself is what now follows, the proving by the way: and again, how truly a man is He! "I will bless Jehovah, who has given me counsel; my reins also instruct me." It is the same Person who speaks in the prophetic word of Isaiah: "The Lord God has given me the tongue of the learned, that I may know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learner."* How real thus was His dependence, walking by the daily counsel of God, His ear early wakened to receive it! We remember how in His temptation in the wilderness, He applied to Himself the saying in Deuteronomy, that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God shall man live." So did He live, then, even as we; only in a perfection all His own. On the one hand there was the direct guidance of the word of God; on the other, His own Spirit-led thoughts, the fruit of that Word digested and assimilated, by which all His practical life was formed. What a place with Him had the Word! "Scripture which cannot be broken," as He said of it once in the face of unbelief. What a place should it not have with us!

This retirement with God, this meditation by night, this daily sought, daily found guidance of God,—how much of it do we really know, in days of so much outward activity as these? The sweet communing of soul with a living Counselor and Lord, how much it is to be feared that this less characterizes the Christian's life than it did of old,—in days that we deem much darker. Yet nothing can really make up for such a deficiency. It is in secret that the roots of faith lay hold of the sustenance that can alone mature into fruit in the outward life.

*The word is the same as for learn*ed*, before; but the sense requires the change.

(ii.) the confirmation of progress.

I have set Jehovah before me [e]continually:
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be [f]moved.

5 (9-11): The way and end.

Wherefore my heart [g]rejoiceth and my glory exulteth:

(i.) sufficiency.

yea, my [h]flesh shall rest secure:

(ii.) in death itself.

For thou wilt not [i]leave to Sheol my soul:
thou wilt not give up thy [j]pious one to see corruption.

[e] Acts 2. 25-28.
[f] Ps. 15. 5. Is. 50. 7-9. 1 Tim. 6. 13.
[g] Heb. 12. 2.
[h] Lk. 23. 46.
[i] Acts 2. 24. 31.
[j] *cf.* Heb. 5. 7.

"The secret of the Lord," which is "with them that fear Him," may we not say, is imparted in secret? How much does the Lord insist upon this secret life before God in His sermon on the mount,—"before your Father who seeth in secret"? Surely, there is little of this, as there should be; and must we not fear that it is becoming less?

It is literally, "my reins *bind* me,"—my thoughts hold me fast: those deep inner thoughts, in which what we are in inmost reality expresses itself. Do such thoughts hold *us* fast? And if so, what is their character? Do they speak joy or sorrow? Peace or anxiety? Of earth or of heaven? Does the Word of God blend with them in harmony, or reprove them? In that season of quiet whose continual recurrence God has ordained for us, to withdraw us from alien influences into ourselves, does the soul freely, gladly, rise to Him? Or where does it wander? Where else does it seek a more congenial companionship? Can we say, with the delight of one of old, "When I awake, I am still with Thee"?

Look now at the purpose which all this implies: "I have set Jehovah always before Me." These are the words of the same perfect Exemplar; and "he that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself to walk even as He walked." And who can doubt how the Man Christ Jesus walked? If we have other ends before us,—money, or reputation, or a life of ease, or what not,—is not our life, in its whole principle, different from His? If it be said, we all fail,—true: but failure in the carrying out of a right principle is one thing, and having a wrong one is quite another. "I have *set* Jehovah before Me" expresses purpose, the choice of the heart; and He could say "*always*," which we cannot. The essence of sin is, "we have turned every one to his *own* way"; and, if "Jehovah has laid on Him the iniquity of us all," this is not that, delivered from the curse of it, we may go on under its bondage; still less, as freely following it. No: if this be iniquity, "let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

For Him who could say, "I have set Jehovah always before Me," what was the result? "Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." There was no tottering, no unsteadiness in His steps: no circumstances, no power of the enemy, could hinder or turn Him aside. All other aims may be defeated, all other hopes frustrated; but where God is before the soul, it can never miss its aim: this is the secret of all prosperity and success. If we have set the Lord before us, we may go forward with the fullest and most assured confidence. And this is, in fact, found in such a course. What hinders faith like a double mind? What strengthens it like a single eye? How can we trust God for a selfish project? How doubt that He will fulfill His own mind? In the path of faith it is that we find faith for the path; and there alone.

5. And now we have the final, the eternal result. The principles of divine government secure the blessing or the curse, as the contrary goals of obedience or disobedience: and this is what Deuteronomy insists upon. For Him whom we have now before us, the government of God could have no mingled results, no doubtful or hypothetical blessing. If death were before Him, we know it as what He found simply in the path of obedience, and in love to men. From it, therefore, the Father's glory necessitated the resurrection of His holy One: "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest

(iii.) resurrection and the presence of God.

Thou wilt show me the [k]path of life,
the fullness of joys, thy [l]presence;
[m]pleasures at thy right hand perpetually.

[k] *cf.* Lk. 9. 51.
[l] *cf.* Jno. 14. 28.
[m] *cf.* Ps. 36. 8.

secure: for Thou wilt not leave to Sheol"—hades—"my soul; Thou wilt not suffer thy Pious One* to see corruption."

There was but One who could come up ont of death upon such a ground: He who, not for His sins, but in His matchless grace, went into it. "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him out of death, and was heard for His piety;† though He were Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and, being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him." (Heb. v. 7–9.) Thus as Captain of our salvation was the One always personally perfect perfected. In the psalm we do not see, indeed, this descent into death as an atoning work, but we do see it as part of a path into which His love to the saints had made Him enter. But thus we recognize it as indeed "the path of life," trodden by Him as Forerunner and Representative of the host of His redeemed. "Thou wilt show me," He says, "the path of life."

The path of life is the path that leads to this: for life in its full reality can only be enjoyed where God, its Source, is. Death is separation from the source of life. When the soul departs, the body left behind is dead; for soul and life are in Scripture one. So, man departed from God—for here the departure is on the reverse side—spiritual death becomes his condition. And the world takes its character from this: it is ont of correspondence with God. The breach is witnessed of through its whole frame; on account of it the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together; and we too who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we also groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption—to wit, the redemption of our body. Thus, though we have life in us, it is a life whose proper display cannot yet be, a "life hid with Christ in God," until "Christ our life shall appear." Meanwhile our path leads up to this: opened for us through death itself by Him who going into it has abolished it, and brought life and incorruption to light by the gospel.

"In Thy presence fullness of joy." What, indeed, to Him who says this,—the Son of the Father, in His self-assumed exile, His face now toward the glory which He had with Him before the world was! There is really no "in," and to leave it out brings out better, perhaps, the force: "fullness of joys, Thy presence! At Thy right hand"—the place of approbation—"pleasures for evermore."

So for us the joy of heaven is defined in this: "we shall be ever with the Lord"; "where I am, there ye shall be also." The knowledge of the Father and of Jesus Christ whom He hath sent, characterizes now for us eternal life. Life in its fullness means for us, then, this knowledge in its own proper home. "In My Father's house are many mansions," says our Lord to His disciples; "*if it were not so, I would have told you:* I go to prepare a place for you." He would not have suffered them unwarned to have enjoyed so dear an intimacy with Himself, if eternity were not to justify and perpetuate it. And for us, every taste of communion now, every moment of enjoyed intimacy is the pledge of its renewal and perfection in the joy beyond. If it were not so, He would not permit it. The glory into which He is gone could not change the heart of Him who once left it for our sakes. The One who descended is the same also who is ascended up. The Glorified is the Crucified. We shall see in His face above the tender lowly condescension of the days of His flesh: "we shall see Him as He *is*," only to find Him as He *was:* nearer as better known.

* "Holy One" is not the sense, and "Pious (or godly) One" is very feeble; but we do not seem to be able to find a better word in English. *Chasid* speaks of tender, overflowing affection, in relation to God or to parents, and again of mercy overflowing from God to His creatures.

† A different word, however, from that which is used in Greek for the Hebrew one of the psalm, and implying reverent fear of God.

At His right hand, too, we shall all be; whatever special rewards there are, there will be gracious approbation for all. It is sweet to know that whatever differences may obtain among us, the *common* joys will also be the deepest and greatest. Fruit of our own work which we may have, what can it be, compared with the fruit of *His* work, which we shall enjoy together? Children of God alike, the Father's heart and home will be for all. To be members of Christ, His bride, joint-heirs with Him, will be our common portion. "Kings and priests unto His God and Father," He has made our common privilege. There is an unhappy legal tendency to make special rewards mean what is real distortion of all this, as if some of His own, after all He has done for them, might be left in comparative distance from Him. Even the "many mansions" of the Father's house have been made to minister to such a thought. Nothing could be less like the real purport of those blessed, assuring words, which just emphasize the *room for all*, the taking in of all, and for eternity.

PSALM XVII.

The sixteenth psalm, then, has shown us the perfect obedience of One who has come into the path of it in love toward the saints, a path which has led Him as far as death itself, but to find through it a way of life, a way into the presence of God, and the eternal joy there. Now in the seventeenth, we have the effect of this, the identification of Christ with His people, making His appeal against the enemy, grounded upon His personal perfection, to avail for them. The psalm, taken by itself, would but obscurely express this, the work of atonement not having as yet been brought out, as later it will be, when immediately the fullness of grace toward others becomes manifest. Here, for the most part, the psalm is apparently an individual appeal,— Christ, who is most surely the Speaker, pleading in His own behalf. In the seventh verse first a plural is introduced, but in such a way as at first sight only to enunciate the general principle under which His individual case would come; and the common rendering (which is a legitimate one) would make this clearly the meaning. After this again all is individual until the eleventh verse, where we find again a plural, "*our* steps," but with which, strangely enough, the written text in the Hebrew joins a singular, "they have surrounded *me*," though the *K'ri* (the "spoken" amended text) substitutes "us," which the modern translations generally accept.* But the Septuagint has preserved the "me," and gives the first part of the verse quite differently.

Thus there have been evident difficulties with this abrupt plural,— which is found no more to the end of the psalm. If we realize no divine order in the series, we lose the clue by which to penetrate the mystery, or more likely see no mystery. If it be of God, on the other hand, that the seventeenth psalm has its place between the sixteenth and the eighteenth, then these verses acquire special importance, and not only become themselves intelligible, but give light upon the whole character of the psalm. And this is constantly so with the "dark" things of Scripture, which in this very way claim special attention from us: the Spirit of God would by this awaken interest on our part, and never, we may be sure, without some special reward for the search to which it prompts. Nor is there anything of this sort so small but that it may cover a great treasure.

When it is seen, by this absolute perfection which He claims unchallenged, Who the Speaker in this psalm is, then the association of others with Him must have very special interest. It has been noticed by others how careful in this particular Scripture is. "My Father and your Father," the Lord says to His disciples; never "*our* Father": that would really falsify the relationship. So He prays *for* them, and invites them to *watch* — but never to *pray* — with Him. All this is perfect in its place. So in this psalm the cry is single, individual; the perfection is His alone who cries; it is "give ear unto *my* prayer; incline thine ear unto Me; Thou answerest Me." But, if the way in which the seventh verse

* It involves only the continuation of the stroke of the *jod*, by which it becomes a *vau*.

Ps. xvii.

[2]PSALM XVII.

An appeal against the enemy: on the ground of the perfection of Christ, the Intercessor for the people.

A prayer of David.

1 (1-5): The appeal of the perfect One.
(i.) hear righteousness.
(ii.) confidence of faith.
(iii.) manifested before God.
(iv.) testing men by the Word.
(v.) the result in divine government.

HEAR [n]righteousness, Jehovah! attend to my loud cry:
give ear unto my prayer, from no [o]deceitful lips.
My judgment shall come forth from thy presence:
thine eyes regard equity:
Thou hast [p]tried my heart; thou hast visited me by [q]night:
thou hast assayed me; thou findest nothing:
my [r]mouth goeth not beyond my thoughts.
As for the works of men, by the [s]word of thy lips
I have kept me from the paths of the violent.
My steps [t]holding fast to thy ways,
my footsteps have not swerved.

n Ps. 7. 8. *cf.* Jno. 8. 46.
o ctr. Matt. 15. 8.
p Ps. 7. 9. *cf.* Heb. 4. 15.
q Ps. 16. 7. *cf.* Lk.6.12.
r cf. 1 Pet.2. 22. *ctr.*Jas.3.8-10.
s cf. Matt. 4. 4, 7, 10. Ps. 119.105.
*t cf.*Jno.8.29. *cf.* Acts. 10. 38.

is rendered here be the right one, then the prayer is for the salvation of all who "take refuge" in God,—that is, of all believers. And then even that which seems most individual in the prayer becomes possible to be read in the light of the truth of the identification of the believer with his Representative before God,—of his being "in Christ Jesus."

How this psalm, then, displays the Mediator will be evident. It at once takes its place with the other psalms of this series; and we are able to see in it the love which has manifested itself to men, as well as the strength of their salvation. Christ is not here asking for Himself; but is the great Intercessor in behalf of His people. Let us take it up in detail.

1. The psalm divides into three main parts, the first of which gives the appeal of the Perfect One on the ground of that perfection. He asks, not for mercy but for righteousness, and in entire confidence in God claims Him as Judge in His behalf. He knows Him,—knows that His eyes regard equity.

It is One with whom He is not meeting for the first time. The all-searching eyes have been upon Him; and in the silence of the night, when truth, freed from the conflict of the world's voices, makes itself most clearly heard, God had been with Him; the Light of light, in the presence of which the slightest breath of evil had been a dense and darkening cloud, had shone down to meet a perfect response. "Thou hast assayed me; Thou findest nothing!" This is the Voice that said on earth: "I do always the things that please Him"; and there was but One: "my mouth goeth not beyond my thoughts," is the answer of perfect Truth to perfect Light.

Around Him there was only contradiction to all this: "the works of *men*" He puts all together, making no distinction, giving them no other name but that. "As for the works of men, by the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the violent,"—the breaker forth: that is the character of men at large: God's word, God's will, they persistently break through. Alas, there is nowhere a timid woman,—nowhere the child of a few years,—who could not be characterized in this way.

Let us notice how distinctly He affirms the word of God to be His guide and guard. If a perfect moral nature were enough, He had surely that,—"holy" from His very birth. If there were any who might be supposed superior to the need of a "book" to guide, here was One; yet how perfectly he held to, and upheld at all times the "word of Thy lips." And how great our need, then, of it! How thorough should be our subjection to it! "The word of Thy lips,"—the very utterance of God Himself! It is as if the psalmist would utterly refuse to be hindered by that "human element in inspiration," of which in the present

2 (6–12): For deliverance from the enemy.

(i.) power and truth in God.

(ii.) the Saviour.

(iii.) my sanctuary.

(iv.) the trial.

(v.) self-hardened.

(vi.) their attempted mastery of the righteous.

(vii.) the complete picture.

I have [u]called upon thee, for thou wilt answer me, O Mighty:
incline thine ear unto me; hearken to my word.
Show marvelously thy [v]loving-kindness:
saving those taking [w]refuge from those rising up [against them,]
with thy right hand.
Keep me as the reflection in the [x]eye,
hide me in the shadow of thy wings,
From the [y]wicked that oppress me,
my enemies [that] with desire encircle me.
In their own [z]fat are they closed up:
with their mouth they [a]speak proudly.
At every step of ours,* now are they [b]round us:
they fix their eyes to bow [us] to the earth.
Each† is like a [c]lion greedy to tear,

u *cf.* Ps. 40. 1. *cfr.* Ps. 22. 2.
v Ps. 31. 21. Ps. 63. 3.
w *cf.* Ps. 16. 1.
x Deut. 32. 10. Zech. 2. 8. *cf.* Jno. 14. 9, 10.
y *cf.* Ps. 10. 2. etc.
z Deut. 32. 15. Ps. 73. 7.
a Ps. 10. 3. Obad. 12.
b *cf.* Ps. 118. 10–12.
c Ps. 7. 2. Ps. 10. 9.

* *Literally*, "[at] our steps." † *Literally*, "his likeness is of a lion."

day we hear so much, from drawing near to Him who would thus draw near, and who cannot be hindered by any creature-limit drawn about Him, from accomplishing His ends.

The result of this divinely guided course is a steadfast and unswerving step. To be with God is, of necessity, to have God with us, and to introduce His unchanging character into our ways. Thus the apostle, preaching no "yea and nay," but a "yea and amen" Christ, can affirm for himself that with him also there is not yea and nay. (2 Cor. i. 17–19.) Yet though He did not now repent of his previous letter, he had repented. (chap. vii. 8.) Only One has trodden perfectly this perfect path, and "left us an example that we should walk in His steps."

2. Thus we have had the ground of the appeal. Now we have the nature of the appeal, as a cry for deliverance from the enemy, so commonly before one in these pages. God is invoked as the God of power, and trusted as the God of truth. Answer, He will; and the certainty of this has drawn forth the cry. What confidence, too, may be ours, with the name of Him whom the Father ever heareth by which to draw near to God.

Yet it is an appeal to "*marvelous* loving-kindness," because of those for whom, as if entirely for Himself, it is made: for it is a prayer for sinners who not in weakness merely but in the consciousness of unworthiness "take refuge" in the mercy as well as the might of God. This is surely no common ground upon which He as well as they are to find acceptance, but far different from that. He does not associate Himself with these suppliants, but prays *for* them; and then again His voice is heard as for Himself alone. He is not associating Himself with them, so as to say, "Keep *us*," but identifying Himself with them, so that He can say, "Keep *Me*,"—they being covered with the perfection of His beauty, and God to act toward them as to Himself. Such language we shall find elsewhere in the Psalms: words of a Substitute and Representative of His people,—a glory of Christ, to be found, as we surely know, everywhere in Scripture, though here presented in the peculiar manner of the Psalms, a secret for faith to penetrate and possess.

For Who is it in the fortieth psalm, who, coming into the world simply to do the will of God, and to offer to Him the one offering, now to take the place of all others, cries out "*Mine* iniquities have taken hold upon Me"? And Who, as the Trespass-offering in the sixty-ninth psalm, "restoring what He took not away," says yet again, "My trespasses* are not hid from Thee"? Such things we are

* *Ashmothai;* not "sins," as in the common version.

3 (13-15): The portion of the men of the world and of the saint. (i.) supremacy of God.

and like a young lion couching in the coverts.
[d]Arise, Jehovah; confront him, cast him down:
rescue my life* from the wicked one, thy [e]sword;

d Ps. 10. 12.
e *cf.* Is. 10.5. *cf.* Jer. 50. 23.

* *nephesh*, both "soul" and "life."

forced, if we apply them (as we must) to Christ, to interpret rightly. Yet here we have only that same truth of representation of which substitution is but the result in suffering and sacrifice,—the Cloud-Pillar of ministrant Glory.

Looked at as the intercession of Christ for His own,—the saints in whom all His delight is,—how tenderly does He speak of them! "Keep Me as the reflection in the eye,"—which is literally, "the little man," the human figure, "the daughter" or product "of the eye." It is the image of *Himself* which God sees, as it were in the eyes of His beloved Son, ever having Himself before them! will He not preserve *that?*

Then He draws near to the Father's heart for refuge: "hide me in the shadow of Thy wings." It is the image so familiar to us in the breathings of the Lord's own heart over Jerusalem; but there love that was refused.

"From the wicked that oppress me,—my enemies that with desire [literally, "in soul,"—the seat of desire] encircle me: in their own fat are they closed up,"—shut up in their own luxurious selfishness; and this is the most evident penalty of sin, which even here begins to stiffen and harden the heart into the unchangeableness of eternity: sin being the coffin, the grave, the final prison of the soul!

Now you see them in their settled enmity against the righteous; and here the plural comes in again, as we have seen. The wicked associate the Lord's people with Himself; or at least hate His reflection in them. What they do to them, they do really therefore to Him. With the savage intensity of bloodhounds they are here seen dogging the steps of their victims; fastening their eyes on them, ready to pull them down to the ground. Their whole figure is just that indeed of a ravenous beast of prey: humanity is lost with the casting off of God, and the beast made to be taken and destroyed is his only likeness.

3. The third part, from an Israelite standpoint, is a very striking one. It contrasts the portion of the saint, now suffering at the hands of the wicked, with that of the wicked at whose hands they suffer, and who, completely under divine control, and used of God for the accomplishment of His purposes, has from His hand a present portion, soon to pass away. Beyond it lies that of faith, with God and eternal.

We see that this is not the standpoint of law, which "is not of faith," (Gal. iii. 12), and which distinctly has its blessings in the present, but answers rather to our Lord's story of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke xvi.), where the one accepted of God is yet unable to claim anything under law,—is but a beggar (comp. Ps. xxxvii. 25), while the man careless of God is the "man of this world." For the Jewish believer of the period to which these psalms have special reference, in the short crisis of trouble so often brought before us, and with millennial days in immediate prospect, the portion of faith is not necessarily—not even nominally—in heaven; but rather in the scene which the psalm last referred to pictures, when the meek will possess the earth and the wicked be cast out of it. For the Christian the blessing to be enjoyed is, of course, heavenly; and of the Jewish remnant of the future, of whom these psalms speak, many will be slain, and thus find their place with the heavenly instead of the earthly people. These are the martyrs who, in the final visions of the Apocalypse, are seen to join the company of the throned saints of the first resurrection. (Rev. xx. 4-6.)

This part begins with an urgent cry once more for God to interfere. "Arise, Jehovah, confront him, cast him down: rescue my life from the wicked one, thy sword." So (rightly, I believe,) the common version. The revised puts "*by* thy sword"; remanding the older translation to the margin. But there is no preposition in the Hebrew, though that is often the case where we should put one:

(ii.) the wicked: their service and portion.

From men, thy hand, Jehovah:
from [f]men of time, whose portion is in life,
whose [g]belly thou fillest with thy store:
sons have they to the full,
and [h]leave their superfluity to their babes.

(iii.) the portion of the saint.

For me, in righteousness shall I [i]behold thy face:
I shall be [j]full, awaking in thine image.

[f] Ps. 10. 18.
[g] *cf.* Phil. 3. 19. *cf.* Jas. 5. 5.
[h] Ps. 49. 10, 11.
[i] Ps. 16. 10, 11. *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 2.
[j] Ps. 65. 4. *cf.* Is. 53. 11 with Heb. 12. 2.

the sense given by the common version, however, is more in accordance with the context, and gives the fuller thought. If the lawless persecutor be, after all, God's sword, then how simple for Him to turn it aside! His supremacy is manifest; and this is carried into the next verse, where, however, the same question is raised, shall we say "from men thy hand," or "*by* thy hand"? But that their portion is from God there *is* no question. Acting for Him, although they mean it not, indeed mean nothing less, yet He gives them for their work, as He paid Nebuchadnezzar for his blind service against Tyre. (Ezek. xxix. 18, 19.) But this is not His grace or in the things that His grace bestows. They are but men of the world, or of time, as I have rendered the word, because the sense of transitoriness inheres in it;* they have their portion in a life that passes away. "Full" they may well be, therefore, for a time, and who shall envy them? though they may leave what is more than they can themselves enjoy, with the brief lives in which to enjoy it,—to their babes.

The saints' portion, too, can be expressed in a few words; but who can estimate it aright? "For me, in righteousness shall I behold Thy face; I shall be full, awaking in Thine image."

Here in the first place, that it is Christ's own voice is evident. The hope before Him is objective and subjective. On the one hand, as come out of His voluntary exile from it, the beholding of the Father's face in the place of full and supreme manifestation; on the other, His own emerging from all the conditions of manhood in the humiliation in which He had assumed it, so as to be in manhood itself the manifest image and glory of God. We know, indeed, how little of what this implies; but it is the path of His humanity we trace in it, and thus we know that in measure we too are to share it with Him. Even of man in the old creation it could be said that "he is the image and glory of God." (1 Cor. xi. 7.) And if this be sadly obscured by the fall, it is, even apart from this, the shadow only of the ultimate purpose of God with regard to man. And while Christ is its perfect expression, the breadth of this expression must take in all redeemed humanity in some sense. No doubt that here also there are degrees of such glory,—glory celestial and glory terrestrial, as in nature. Thus again God, who is light, is the "Father of lights,"—many-hued and many-toned, in order that the light itself may have more adequate expression.

The objective and subjective, while different, are in close connection. "We know that we shall be like Him," says the beloved apostle; and this is the reason he gives for it, "for we shall see Him as He is." (1 John iii. 2.) On the other hand, "the world knew Him not," (John i. 10,) because morally it had wandered far from Him. Could untruth apprehend the perfect Truth, or Love be understood by what was "enmity against God"? For us, when the long conflict with sin within us shall be over, how wondrous shall be the soul's vision out of its now undimmed eyes, how shall the "pure in heart" find the blessedness predicted for them, that "they shall see God"!

For the Lord, there could, of course, be no change in this respect. The days of His youth were as holy as His manhood; those of His life on earth no less so than His life in heaven. Such limitations, however, there were assumed in His assumption of flesh as made possible a life of faith, nay, the pattern life. Here we know indeed nothing except that of which the word of God assures us, and

* As in Psalm lxxxix. 47: "Remember how short my time is,"—literally, "how transitory I am"!

Ps. xviii.

[3]PSALM XVIII.

God manifesting Himself for His Anointed.

To the chief musician: [a psalm] of [k]David, the servant of Jehovah, who spake unto Jehovah the words of this song, in the day when Jehovah had delivered him out of the grasp of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul. And he said:—

1 (1-3): Jehovah the rock of faith.
(i.) my strength.
(ii.) my Saviour.

I DO fervently [l]love thee, Jehovah, my strength,
Jehovah, my [m]cleft of the rock, and my [n]fortress,
and my [o]rescuer!
my Mighty One, my rock, in whom I take [p]refuge!

k *cf.* 2 Sa. 22.
l Ps. 116. 1.
m Ps. 31. 3. *ctr.* Obad. 3, 4.
n Ps. 31. 3. *cf.* Phil. 4. 7.
o *cf.* Ps. 40. 17.
p *cf.* Heb. 2. 13.

would be careful in any reasoning at all upon it. Yet we may be sure that whatever were these limitations they would make possible for Him also a looking forward to behold the face of God, as on earth He had not beheld it. Wonder as we may and must, His humanity was in these respects such as ours, "apart from sin." He abode in it, though divine, subjecting Himself to its conditions, so that He could be really a babe, a child, a man, and then again under the awful shadow of the desertion of the cross! What perfect love—what utter reverence—do we owe Him, for such inconceivable self-humiliation as was this!

PSALM XVIII.

We come now, in the third psalm of this series, to the manifestation of God in behalf of Messiah, whose deliverance and exaltation involve the deliverance and blessing of the people with whom He has linked Himself. But the result is wider than this also: He is made the Head of the nations, and a people that He had not known before serve Him.

But a large part of the psalm is taken up with the way in which God has displayed Himself in all this,—His personal intervention, His character as manifested,—all that makes Him the object of His people's praise. And this revelation of Himself is, as this implies, their blessing and happiness forever, as it is that of all His creatures,—unfallen and redeemed alike.

This psalm is found also at the end of David's history in the book of Samuel,* the occasion of it being given similarly in each place, and the end of the psalm itself assuring us of its application to David in the first place, though a greater than he shines through continually. At this we have no possible cause to wonder, knowing him to be in his life so largely typical of God's "Beloved" and King, for whom we look.

In perfect accord with its character, the first forty-five verses of the psalm are in triplets throughout; these dividing into six main portions, the seventh closing with five verses of praise.

1. The psalm begins, as it ends, with praise. Jehovah, the living and unchanging God, is celebrated in it as the Rock of faith, and that in double character: the first word "means properly," as Delitzsch observes, "a cleft in a rock, then a cleft rock"; the second, "a great and hard mass of rock." Accordingly, in the first, "the idea of a safe (and comfortable) hiding-place preponderates"; in the second, "that of firm ground and inaccessibility. The one figure calls to mind the well-watered Edomitish *Sela*, surrounded with precipitous rocks, . . . the other calls to mind the Phœnician rocky island *Tzur* (Tyre), the refuge in the sea." The cleft Rock is a figure for the Christian full of tender, wonderful associations; the firm, impregnable, eternal Rock, yet cleft for a refuge to the soul fleeing to it for escape. And this double thought is varied and expanded through all these epithets with which the psalmist declares the good cause he has for fervent love toward his God. They are capable also of double applica-

*A comparison with Samuel will show, however, many differences, for the most part slight, which the known MSS. give us no help in removing, and which, therefore, we may suppose to be designed, even though we may not have read our Bibles carefully enough to apprehend their meaning.

my [q]shield, and the [r]horn of my salvation, my [s]high tower!

(iii.) how realized.

Upon the object of my praise,—upon Jehovah do I [t]call,

2 (4-6): Confronting death.

and from my [u]enemies I am saved.

The [v]toils of death faced me about,

(i.) lawlessness.

and the [w]torrents of Belial put me in fear.

[q] ver. 30. [r] *cf.* 1 Sam. 2. 10. Luk. 1. 69. [s] Ps. 144. 2. [t] Ps. 105. 1. [u] ver. 40. [v] Ps. 116. 3. [w] Is. 59. 19. Ps. 93. 3.

tion, as the language of the Lord, or of those whom we have seen that He here identifies Himself with and represents. We shall find, of course, in this as in other psalms, passages in which One personality shines out, forbidding association of any other with it. We may find, perhaps, those in which it is easier at least to recognize the many for whom He stands (or some of these), than it is their Representative. This we may expect. One passage (verse 23) which, as it reads in the common and other versions, *could* not be applied to Him, should receive, it is believed, another meaning. In general, we may expect to find unmistakably through these psalms the Voice like which there is no other, while yet we shall sufficiently discern that He who speaks has linked Himself with others, so that His cause and theirs are one.

The third verse gives the realization of Jehovah as the rock of the soul: "I call upon Jehovah, the object of my praise, and I am saved from my enemies." This is what he who speaks has found; and all that follows here is the expansion of it.

2. Accordingly we go back to the "strait" out of which he cries to God, and is answered. And once more we find that it is the shadow which darkens the world which he is facing. The toils of death are round him, escape shut off; and it is death as we have seen it, and as the conscience recognizes it,—death as the doom of sin.

The words are simple enough, but all the more has their meaning to be gathered from their context and connections, rather than learned directly. And this is characteristic of the psalms, as it is of much of the Old Testament. We have to bring in the light of the New in order to be able to see what is hidden in it for us: it is the Old Testament itself that bids us remember that "it is the glory of God to conceal a thing," as it is "the honor [or glory] of kings to search out a matter." (Prov. xxv. 2.) Would that in this research into Scripture "kings" were more plentiful!

Here the person of the speaker is of all importance; and however He may identify Himself with others, in this psalm it is Christ who is this throughout. Thus, when *He* says "the torrents of Belial put me in fear," we have to consider in what sense it would be possible for Him to say this. Belial — though it seems better to anglicize than to translate the Hebrew word — means, evidently, "worthlessness," the "ungodly men" of the common version, which the revised changes into "ungodliness." * The word is, indeed, much more than the English one, of a moral significance very positive, and not negative merely. In the moral and spiritual spheres, there is nothing merely negative: simple indifference here is crime. Thus Belial is used in the New Testament as standing for the direct opposite of Christ; and the "sons of Belial," in the language of the Old, are always those lawless ones who, whenever the occasion arises, manifest themselves as law-breakers, hostile to God and man. The "torrents of Belial" are undoubtedly such corrupt and lawless men; only marking their wickedness as that which produces fear in Him who speaks here. Their power, whatever it were, surely could not, any more than death could in its physical suffering, or in aught beyond it. For Him, the sting of it would be as judgment from God; and such it was, of necessity, for Him who took it as the Sin-bearer and Substitute for sinners.

* "Perdition," "the abyss,"—adopted by Delitzsch and others, are not justified by the texts appealed to, such as Ps. xli. 8, Nah. i. 11, and 2 Cor. vi. 15: these do not depart from the regular meaning.

(ii.) death in itself.
(iii.): God from His temple.

The toils of [z]Sheol encompassed me:
the snares of death confronted me.
In my [y]strait I called upon Jehovah,
and cried out unto my God:
out of his [z]temple he heard my voice,
and my cry came before him—into his ears.

3 (7–18): The appearing of God.
a (7–9): the Almighty.
(i.) His power.

And the [a]earth shook and quaked:
and the foundations of the hills trembled
and were shaken, because he was wroth.

x Ps. 6. 5. Ps. 16. 10.
y Ps. 118. 5.
z cf. Ps. 20. 2.
a Ju. 5. 4. Ps. 114. 5–7. *cf.* Matt. 28. 2.

Thus wrath was in it, separation from Him who was of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, though this was *upon* Him only.

"The torrents of Belial" must then have "put Him in fear," by the horror of what sin was to Him, as He realized it in the light in which He lived with God, from the joy of that well-known, glorious Presence, earth itself but the footstool of Deity. He had come into it but to do, amid sorrow and suffering, the Father's will, which man could violate at his pleasure, and count it pleasure, and imagine it freedom to do so! For this He was to die, taking the sinner's place; men like these — His creatures, with His stamp defaced in them — driving the nails which fastened Him to the cross, plunging the spear into His side, sealing Him up in His grave, defying Him to come out of it again! Giving Himself up freely to all this, while struck with the awful horror of it all, well might He exclaim, "The torrents of Belial put me in fear!"

Sin itself,—just to know it aright, could it be known fully,—in a soul where there was no callousness such as it induces,—what a supreme agony would it be!

And the due of sin,—to bear *that* death, as no saint has known,—as no sinner could ever know it,—the living death of the Heir and Fountain of Life; the Life eternal proving the nameless woe of the shadow of death, where faith could no more say, "But Thou art with Me."

It is impossible to speak of it aright. Scripture itself leaves the veil upon it. Those who, moved by the Spirit of God to give us the story of the cross, as from their various points of view they regard it, stand in the hush of the night that falls, pointing, as it were in silence, to the sacred Figure "lifted up from the earth," and upon its head the crown of thorns.

"I cry . . . and Thou answerest not," are the words of the psalm of atonement; but then again, "when He cried unto Him, He heard." (Ps. xxii. 2, 24.) Both things, of course, true: each suited in its place. The psalm here celebrates the hearing, and that out of the sanctuary,—the answer of God in His holiness to the Holy One: with that answer, and its result in blessing for the people of God (that is, for Israel and the millennial nations,) the rest of the psalm is occupied.

3. We have now therefore the appearing of God in behalf of His suffering Holy One. But when we come to the detail of this intervention, while it may well apply to the accompaniments of the resurrection of Christ, and no doubt has this in view, on the other hand the description as a whole irresistibly reminds us of the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt. Indeed the actual theophany, the heavens bowed as God comes down, the judgment executed upon the enemies, ending with the exaltation of Christ over the nations of the earth,—all this connected as it is together, carries us on to events yet future, when God will out-do the wonders in Egypt in a new deliverance of Israel from the hands of the nations their enemies, and bring in the final blessing of which prophecy is full. (Mic. vii. 15.) This accounts for the apparent glance back at the exodus; while it is really the answer of God to Christ's work of atonement, which accounts equally for His voice being heard as it is, all through. Thus we find the same representative character of the Lord as in the previous psalm, and the confirmation of the view of that which has been already taken.

(*a.*) The twelve verses of this section, one might expect to have the usual 3 x 4

(ii.) the destroying wrath.
(iii.) Himself from the bowed heavens.
b (10-12): the Judge.
(i.) in righteousness.
(ii.) His obscuration.
(iii.) His display.
c (13-15): the full manifestation.

Smoke went up from his nostrils,
and [b] fire out of his mouth consumed:
coals were set aflame by it.
And he [c] bowed the heavens and came down,
and thick [d] darkness was under his feet.
And he rode upon a [e] cherub, and flew:
yea, he swooped upon wings of [f] wind.
He made darkness his [g] covert,
his pavilion about him darkness of waters,
thick clouds of the skies.
From the brightness before him his thick clouds passed,—
[h] hail, and coals of fire.
And Jehovah [i] thundered in the heavens,

b Ps. 97.3-5.
c Ps. 144. 5. *cf.* Mi.1.3,4.
d Deut.4.11. *cf.* Am. 5. 18, 20.
e *cf.* Ezek. 10. Ps. 99. 1.
f *cf.* Ezek. 1. 4. Ps. 104. 3.
g Is. 45. 15. Ps. 97. 2.
h Ex. 9. 24. Is. 28. 17. Rev. 8. 7.
i Ps. 77. 18. Rev. 4. 5.

division, and so they have. The first three show us God as the Almighty, the earth and the heavens bearing witness to His power alike. The earth to the foundations of the hills trembles before Him; His wrath is a consuming fire; the heavens are bowed under Him as He comes down. This witness of nature to His presence, readily as we understand it, and simple as it really is, has yet lessons for us which would serve us well if they were better learned. Creation is not only a mirror of divine perfections: it is pervaded by His power, and sensitive to His slightest movement. There is an intimate sympathy thus between the natural and spiritual, which we feel far better than we can explain, and which makes the face of nature a constant parable of spiritual things. This, superstition has misused on the one hand, while on the other the growing wisdom of the day, with its continual fresh discovery of governing laws, loses sight of or refuses what it helps to demonstrate. For laws governing without a governor are themselves an irrational superstition, no less so because a profane one. There is in nature, as they own, an inscrutable power which transcends it; and this, too, a "power that makes for righteousness." Christianity alone tells us *Whose* this power is.

(*b.*) In the second triplet of verses the Almighty becomes the Judge.* The cherub, from the first view in Eden to its Apocalyptic representatives in the last book of the New Testament, is always connected with divine government,—the throne of God as ruling over the earth. The ark and mercy-seat are still this throne in relation to Israel, and the cherubim there are of one piece with the latter, their faces looking to the place where the atoning blood is sprinkled before God. He was said to dwell between the cherubim; and these express the executive righteousness of the throne; and in their fourfold character as lion, ox, with the face of a man, and flying eagle, we find represented power, patient service, intelligence, and yet inscrutability. (Prov. xxx. 19.) The riding upon the cherub here, therefore, indicates judicial action, and the "wings of the wind" combine the speed and power of the storm blast, a figure which the next verses carry on.

Yet in judgment God is rather hidden than displayed: it is His "strange work." Thus He makes the darkness His covert. It is His contrary, inasmuch as He is love and light; and yet He uses it as His pavilion, and, while not it, is *in* it. The judgment, where it comes, is in fact, in its most awful feature, separation from Him,—from the Light; while it is yet not merely that. From these thick clouds the light flashes forth,—hailstones and coals of fire (see Exod. ix. 13-35, *notes*); for God is displayed even in the judgment that separates from Him.

(*c.*) The third triplet gives the full display. It is now plainly Jehovah who thunders in the heavens, and the Most High who gives His voice. And we see where the bolt strikes: His arrows are lightnings, with which Messiah's enemies

*A new symbolism for the number two; but "judgment" is in fact *discernment;* that is, division, separation, putting a difference, and thus comes rightly under this number.

(i.) the Supreme.
(ii.) the defeat of the enemy.
(iii.) the revelation of the earth.
d (16-18): The experience
(i.) of divine sufficiency.
(ii.) of dependence.
(iii.) Jehovah Himself the stay.

and the [j]Highest gave his voice,—
hail and coals of fire.
And he sent his arrows, and [k]scattered them,
yea, he shot out lightnings and discomfited them.
And the [l]channels of the waters were seen,
and the foundations of the world were uncovered:
at thy [m]rebuke, Jehovah,—
at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.
He reached from above, he took me,
he [n]drew me from many waters.
He [o]delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them that hated me,
for they were [p]too strong for me.
They confronted me in the [q]day of my calamity:
but Jehovah was my stay.

j Ps. 21. 7.
k Ps. 144. 6. Isa. 30. 30. Ps. 68. 1,14.
l Ex. 15. 8, 19.
m Nah. 1. 4. Isa. 50. 2.
n cf. Ex. 2. 10. *cf.* Ps. 69. 1, 2 with Rom. 4. 24.
o ver. 48.
p cf. 2 Cor. 13. 4.
q cf. Ps. 20 1. *cf.* Ps. 22. 11.

are scattered and discomfited. The earth is laid bare to its foundations, and the channels of waters are seen: words which remind us of Israel's passage of the Sea, and which may find in the future also their fulfillment in the drying up of the Euphrates. (Rev. xvi. 12.)

The judgment of God is also the revelation of the earth at all times, and will finally declare the moral character of all its history. This is one great end of prophecy, to enable us beforehand to judge with God the condition of things through which we are now passing, according to that final judgment in which we find them to end. And that final disclosure, will it not be in some sense also the eternal safeguard of His people from all the power of evil, the springs of which will be then laid bare? Scripture speaks of that day as the day of manifestation; and this will not be surely of the individual merely to himself, but of all in the presence of all; making all to see light in God's light. Will not the "holiness of truth" be thus fully confirmed and established for eternity, sealed with the broad seal of God, and demonstrated by the example of all, evil and good alike? Will not the books that are opened then be in effect and effectively the Deuteronomy of the land so reached for every pilgrim?

(*d*) We now come to the experience of the deliverance, in which we find expressions of weakness, which might at first make one doubt as to its being the Lord's voice that is heard at all here. But the connection would assure us of it, and the place of thorough human dependence is that which He takes all through the psalm. Thus it was that, having assumed the burden of sin, and laying down His life, He committed Himself in peace into the Father's hand, to take again from Him the life laid down. The language of the sixteenth psalm we have seen to be the expression of this confidence: "therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest securely: because thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol; nor wilt Thou suffer Thy pious One to see corruption." Thus resurrection is His justification from God, the seal put upon His completed work; the justification, therefore, of all for whom He stands,—of all who through grace believe in Him. In this identification of Himself with them, He comes for the moment into the place of weakness and simple dependence upon the arm of Another for deliverance.

"He reached from above, He took me: He drew me out of many waters." In the last clause of the sentence we have a word only used once beside in the explanation of the name given to Moses, and from which that was derived; but the reference is only by way of comparison; for a greater than Moses is here. "He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them that hated me: for they were too strong for me." Thus the deliverance is the manifestation and glory of Jehovah Himself. "They confronted me in the day of my calamity: but Jehovah was my stay."

4 (19-27): Tested and approved.
a (19-21): as the obedient One.
(i.) the divine complacency.
(ii.) the witness.
(iii.) the holy One.
b (22-24): measured by the Word.
(i.) wholehearted.
(ii.) without perverseness.

And he brought me forth into a [r]large place:
he delivered me because he had [s]delight in me.
Jehovah [t]recompensed me according to my righteousness:
according to the [u]cleanness of my hands he hath returned to me.
For I have [v]kept Jehovah's ways,
and have [w]not wickedly departed from my God.
For all his [x]judgments were before me:
nor did I put his statutes from me.
I was also [y]perfect with him,
and kept myself [z]from perverseness being mine.

3. 5; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 19.

r Ps. 31. 8. *cf.* Ps. 40. 2. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 21.
s cf. Matt. 3. 17. *cf.* Prov. 8. 30.
t cf. Isa. 53. 12. *cf.* Isa. 49. 6.
u cf. Ps. 24. 4. *cf.* Lk. 23. 41.
v cf. Jno. 8. 29. *cf.* Ps. 17. 5.
w ctr. Dan. 9. 15.
x Ps. 16. 8.
y cf. 1 Jno. 3. 5.
z cf. Heb. 2. 18.

Jehovah's character is thus brought out, as it is the glory of the gospel in every part, that it reveals Him. We "believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." Thus we know Him to be for us, in His righteousness as well as in His love, and that very attribute which we had most reason to dread as sinners, is that upon which, because of the work of Christ for sinners, we can rest with undisturbed security. It is His *righteousness* that justifies the believer in Jesus. It is His righteousness that we are "*made*" to be now "in Christ." (2 Cor. v. 21.)

4. But we are now to be shown the character of the One for whom God thus comes in; and in this section, under the number which speaks both of testing and practical walk, we have (set side by side with the character of God Himself) His assured and perfect claim to be heard and answered. Nothing is more unmistakable in the Lord, as we see Him in the full truth of manhood upon earth, than the distinct and emphatic assumption of unspotted perfection at all times. "Meek and lowly in heart" though He was, and clear in His enunciation of man's fallen condition, He never for a moment takes His place among men in any sense that could imply the slightest resemblance to them in this respect. His separateness is indeed so plain that He need not much assert it. Yet He can say as the ground of the Father's constant presence with Him (manifested as it was by His mighty works),—"I do always those things that please Him." And to His opposers even can put as a question admitting but of one answer, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" (John viii. 29, 46.)

The psalmist maintains here for the One he personates a similar perfection, which David for himself, in his "last words," disclaims. So, indeed, might any among mere men. It is He in whom, opening the heavens to do so, the Father proclaims His delight, who is, as we have seen, the real Speaker,—the true David, who is also David's seed.

(*a*) The divine delight in Him has its ground and justification in His perfect obedience. He is righteous not only in intent, but in the cleanness of His hands also. With Him is not the misery of shortcoming of the end of His desire and aim. What He designs He carries through. As He speaks so He is; and His speech is with fullest knowledge. Thus He can say, "I have kept Jehovah's ways"; and His recompense is according to His righteousness.

(*b*) The measurement of all with Him is not by His own thoughts either. He is not a law to Himself, nor does He do simply what is right in His own eyes. Knowing what He is, one might perhaps expect that; and if inspiration were the weak and fallible thing which men now make it, you could not account for the absolute respect which He who even as man had the Spirit given Him without measure, ever paid it. "But how, then, should the Scripture be fulfilled?" was with Him a decisive argument. On the cross, with the parching thirst of the crucified upon Him, it is only "that the Scripture might be fulfilled," that He gives voice to this craving. Truly could He say, then, "All His judgments were before Me; nor did I put His statutes from Me." This was no desultory

(iii.) before God Himself.
c (25-27): the God before whom he is.
(i.) faithful with the faithful.
(ii.) in relation to evil.
(iii.) the God of resurrection.

And Jehovah hath returned me according to my righteousness,
according to the cleanness of my hands before his eyes.
With the [a]merciful thou showest thyself merciful *: a Matt. 5.7. 1 Ki. 8. 32.
and with the perfect man thou showest thyself perfect.
With the pure thou showest thyself pure;
and with the [b]perverse thou showest thyself tortuous. b Lev. 26. 21 -31. Prov. 3. 34. Matt. 7. 2.
For *thou* wilt [c]save a humble people, c Ps. 34. 18, 19.
and bringest low the lofty looks.

5 (28–42): The judgment of the nations.
a (28-30): the Source of power.
(i.) God my light.

For it is thou that [d]lightest my lamp: d Ps. 97. 11. Ps. 112. 4.
Jehovah my God enlighteneth my darkness.

*"Merciful" is not an adequate rendering for *chasid*, nor do we seem able to give the antithesis in English; "pious" cannot be applied to God, nor is "holy" the force as applied to Him. The term as suiting God and man together here should express the affectionate sense of relationship on man's part towards God, and on His part towards man.

or fragmentary or unbalanced obedience. All was in due proportion and perfect symmetry. *It was obedience:* the will of God recognized and governing Him in all things.

"I was also perfect with Him," He says: "and I kept myself from perverseness being mine."* The word rendered "iniquity" in the common version, it is agreed means "perverseness,"—the spirit that would distort or turn aside the force of the divine commands. And again He affirms that Jehovah has recompensed Him according to His righteousness, and according to the cleanness of His hands before those holy eyes.

(*c*) Now the character of God is put side by side with this. He deals with men according to what He sees them to be. The disposition they show toward Him He shows in like manner toward them: the attitude which they assume He assumes; while of course His grace beseeches them to change that which is estranged and hostile, and to be reconciled to Him. But this last has no application to Him who is before us here, and does not therefore come in.

Then He brings low the lofty and saves the humble; and death is that by which God levels all the pride of man, bringing up from death itself those who have accepted its sentence in the practical meaning of it. Thus we have the principle of resurrection, in which the power of God acts *beyond* the sentence, so affirming it, and yet showing His grace. And this grace, after this manner, He has shown in Christ, and shown also to a people identified in grace with Him.

This is the God, then, before whom Christ is, and who answers Him,—though He stoop to death to find the answer, because of His identification with the need of others.

5. We are now carried on into the future, in order to see this answer, as it takes effect in the judgment of the nations who have rejected God and His Anointed. The present time we must not expect to find in Old Testament prophecy; and thus in that to which the Lord appeals in the synagogue of Nazareth (Isa. lxi. 1, 2), "the acceptable year of the Lord," which He was there to proclaim, passes on immediately to the "day of judgment of our God," and so to the restoration of Israel. The psalm here is in the same way connected with Jewish hopes and promises. The suffering Christ becomes, in exaltation, the

*The translation here, which differs from that adopted in 2 Sam. xxii., though not the simplest, is, I think, the real meaning of *me-avoni*. Geier, Delitzsch, and Cheyne agree that this is the sense, and there does not seem any way of reconciling "*my* iniquity" with the perfection of the man, Christ Jesus.

(ii.) help against foes and hindrances.
(iii.) His character.
b (31-33): the girded Servant.
(i.) none beside Jehovah.
(ii.) my help in progress.
(iii.) and giving possession of the land.

For by thee I [e]run through a troop:
and by my God I leap over a wall.
The Mighty—his [f]way is perfect:
Jehovah's word is tried:
he is a [g]shield to all taking refuge in him.
For [h]who is God beside Jehovah?
and who is a rock except our God?
The Mighty, who [i]girdeth me with strength,
and maketh perfect my way!
That maketh my feet like [j]hinds' feet:
and maketh me stand upon my heights.

e cf. Ps. 68. 18. *cf.* Ps. 45. 3, 4.
f Dan. 4. 37.
g Ps. 115. 9-11.
h Deut. 32. 31. Ps. 115.1-8.
i Ps. 45. 3. Isa. 11. 5. ver. 1.
j Hab. 3. 19. *cf.* Gen. 49. 21.

Conqueror and Judge. As Son of man He comes in the clouds of heaven; as Son of man all judgment is committed to Him. Thus He still maintains His dependence: "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." We need not wonder, then, that at the beginning of this section, He as the Speaker ascribes in a similar way His power to God.

(*a*) Besides being a fifth section of the psalm, this has again five subsections, the verses still being in triplets, God manifesting Himself still in all, Jehovah being known in the judgment that He executes.

"For it is Thou that lightest my lamp: Jehovah my God enlighteneth my darkness." So may *He* say, who, though the Son of God, has been in the darkness of desertion at the cross. We think, naturally, of the tabernacle lamp and its identification of divine glory (the gold) with the almond fruit of resurrection, the sign of coming summer, and we remember how He is presented in the Apocalypse as the "Faithful Witness, and the First-born of the dead, and"—as He is going to be manifested directly—"the Ruler of the kings of the earth." (Rev. i. 5.) Just so where He is coming out as this last, we are permitted first of all to see Him as come out of the darkness, where He has removed all hindrance to earth's blessing, that we may rejoice in His assumption of power and possession of the inheritance which is now His.

All enemies and obstacles are now to give way before Him: "For by Thee I run through a troop: and by my God I leap over a wall." And then we have affirmed the character of Him whom the King represents and in whose power He acts: the Mighty One, perfect in His way; the Unchangeable, whose word is tried; and the sure defense of all who take refuge in Him.

(*b*) And who beside is God? Where else is the Rock of confidence for faith? This is the question that will be pressed for speedy settlement when Christ appears. For now is the time of which it is predicted that "Jehovah shall be King over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Jehovah, and His Name one." (Zech. xiv. 9.) Heathenism is swept away at once; all forms of idolatry are brought to an end together; infidelity will cease from the earth, and agnosticism be no more: even though man's heart may as really refuse the known, as it once did "the unknown God."

This Mighty One girds with strength the One whose place is still therefore one of loving service to Him, and makes His way perfect as is His own. His progress is uninterrupted, therefore. "He maketh my feet like hinds' feet,"—able to surmount all difficulties,—"and setteth Me on my heights," the mountains of the chosen land. For in that day "the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established in the tops of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." (Isa. ii. 2.) For Jehovah's throne in Zion shall once again and finally be filled with a human tenant, who shall perfectly represent Him; and "the government shall be upon His shoulder," whose "name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Father of eternity,* the Prince of peace." (Isa. ix. 6.)

*Not "everlasting Father," which has led to wrong thoughts, but "Father of eternity": the One who brings all things into the condition in which they will abide forever.

c (34-36): the way of the realization of this.
(i.) trained strength.
(ii.) defence and enlargement.
(iii.) liberty.

That teacheth my [k]hands for war,
and mine arms bend a bow of bronze.
Yea, thou givest me the [l]shield of thy salvation,
and thy right hand sustaineth me:
thy [m]condescension also hath made me great.
Thou makest room for my steps under me,
and mine ankles have not wavered.

d (37-39): the prostration of enemies.
(i.) steadfast purpose.
(ii.) their humiliation.
(iii.) God the reality.

I [n]pursue mine enemies and overtake them;
nor do I [o]turn till they are made a full end.
I [p]crush them, that they cannot rise:
they fall under my feet.
For thou girdest me with strength for the war:
thou castest beneath me those that rise against me.
Thou hast given me also the [q]backs of mine enemies,
and those that hated me I destroy.
They [r]cry for help, and none saveth:
to Jehovah, and he answereth them not.
And I [s]beat them small as the dust before the wind:
as mire of the streets I pour them out.

e (40-42): the consummation.
(i.) God giving them up.
(ii.) no savior for them.
(iii.) the result.

Thou givest me escape from the [t]contentions of the people;
thou settest me as [u]head of the nations:
a [v]people I have not known, they serve me.

6 (43-45): The rod of iron.
(i.) headship of the nations.

k Ps. 144. 1.
l Ps. 3. 3.
m 1 Ki. 19. 11, 12.
n cf. Ju. 8. 4-12.
o cf. Nu. 23. 24.
cf. Isa. 42. 4.
p cf. Ps. 45. 5.
q Ps. 68. 1.
r cf. Prov. 1. 28. Mi. 3. 4.
s cf. Ps. 1. 4.
t cf. Dan. 7. 2-14.
u cf. Isa. 49. 5-7.
cf. Isa. 60. 3.
cf. Ps. 72. 17.
v cf. Is. 55. 5.
cf. Is. 60. 1-11.

(*c*) But the way this is realized is not, as one might think, by the preaching of the gospel of peace. It must be the "effect of righteousness," and the Davidic phase of the kingdom must precede the Solomonic. We return, therefore, to see Him as the warrior-King: His hands trained for war; Himself covered impenetrably with the shield of God's salvation; sustained by His strong right hand; and withal, as meek as a Conqueror as in His life of grace of old, He says, "Thy condescension also has made Me great." His steps are still directed by Him who makes room thus for each one He takes; and His ankles waver not.

(*d*) Thus we see His enemies now prostrate before Him: He pursues and overtakes them; they fall and rise not; and again it is God who girds Him with the strength He manifests, and casts the pertinacious foe beneath His feet.

(*e*) The end is reached in the fifth section. His foes turn their backs and flee in vain: God has given them up into His hand. They cry in despair at last, even to Jehovah now; but there is no reality in it, and they find no Saviour. They are beaten down as dust, and poured out as the mire of the streets.

6. The "rod of iron" of the second psalm is now sketched in three brief but emphatic verses. He is delivered from the strivings of the people — in Samuel, "my" people — Israel, in their old rebellious state, and made head of the nations, a people formerly unknown to Him. These are obedient as soon as they hear of Him; and there is a manifest power which forbids opposition. Strangers in heart bow perforce, though remaining such: and here we see already the cause of that fresh uprising of evil with which the millennial kingdom ends. And this condition of things shows why Satan, bound in the abyss for a thousand years, is permitted to come out of it at the close to bring out the reality. The visible power of God with the blessing attendant upon Messiah's sway is proved vain to bring man to God. Opposition to Him is no mere fruit of ignorance. In that day there will be none: "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea"; and yet of very many it will be said, as it was of those in the day of Christ's previous sojourn among men: "Now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father." (John xv. 24.)

Thus the devil is permitted to do His final work. The awful inveteracy of sin

(ii.) at the mere report.
(iii.) the manifestation at the end.

As [w]soon as they hear, they hearken to me:
sons of the [z]stranger cringe unto me.
Sons of the stranger fade away,
and are [y]afraid out of their close places.

7 (46-50): Closing praises.
(i.) Jehovah the living Rock.
(ii.) the Judge.
(iii.) the God of resurrection.

Jehovah [z]liveth, and blessed be my Rock,
and [a]exalted be the God of my salvation!
The Mighty, who [b]avengeth me,
and subdueth peoples under me;
Who giveth me escape from mine enemies:
yea, thou liftest me up above those that rise against me:
thou deliverest me from the man of [c]violence.

(iv.) praise among the nations.

[d]Therefore will I praise thee, Jehovah, among the nations,
and will sing psalms unto thy name.

(v.) man with God.

[It is he] who giveth great deliverances unto his [e]king,
and showeth loving-kindness unto his anointed,
unto David and his [f]seed for evermore.

w cf. Ex. 18. 1. *cf.* Ps. 45. 9, 12. *cf.* Isa. 66. 18-20.
x cf. Josh. 9. 3, etc. *cf.* Zech. 14. 16, 17.
y cf. Mi. 7. 16, 17. *cf.* Jer. 33. 9.
z Jer. 4. 2.
a Ex. 15. 2.
b cf. 1 Ki. 2. 5-10.
c Ps. 10. 2, 3
d cf. Ps. 22. 25-29.
e Ps. 2. 6.
f cf. Jno. 7. 42. *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 8. *cf.* Ps. 72. 5, 17.

is manifested. He comes out of a thousand years' restraint; and with his doom at last before his eyes, to work out still unrepentantly the ruin of others and his own. And men on their side turn from the blessedness in which they have shared to listen to his deception. Thus the last verse finds its fulfillment: "sons of the stranger fade away, and are afraid out of their close places." All is manifest at last, and the work of probation is over: eternity, in fact, has come.

7. The last five verses are an ascription of praise to God, in the same character as at the beginning of the psalm, and summing up in brief the mercies which have been recounted. He is the living and unchanging God, the Rock of faith, the Saviour; the avenging Judge, subduer of the peoples; the God of resurrection, thus lifting up above all enemies. For this cause He is praised among the nations. And the close celebrates the whole as loving-kindness to Jehovah's King, to David and his seed alike.

Thus, it is plain, the first series of these psalms ends; and in the nineteenth we go back to find a new beginning.

Series 2.

The second series accordingly manifests at once a different character from the former one. Christ is no longer in it the speaker; nor in the nineteenth psalm even the subject. We have instead creation and the law, the great testimonies of God before Christ came,—though these had, surely, Christ in view, and were intended to lead on to Him. Thus the twentieth and twenty-first psalms following complete the divine testimony with the witness of Christ Himself in His work and its consequences for men. The real depth of the atoning work remains indeed to be explored in the well-known psalm which follows; but we have here His work as sacrificial, and the result in some sense for the faith that accepts it. In this section we have therefore "faith embracing the testimony of God, and laying hold of Christ's salvation."

PSALM XIX.

The nineteenth psalm gives us, then, the prior witness before Christ came, but which faith realizes as what the apostle calls the law,—the "word of the beginning of Christ." (Heb. vi. 1, *marg.*) If the knowledge of the new man is that "Christ is *all*," (Col. iii. 10, 11,) then He must be found in creation and law alike, or these must be thrown aside as unworthy of contemplation or regard.

SERIES 2. (Psalm xix.—xxi.)
Faith embracing the testimony of God, and laying hold upon Christ's salvation.

Ps. xix.

[1]PSALM XIX.

The power of creation and of the law.

To the chief musician: a psalm of David.

1 (1-6): Creation.

(i.) declaring the Mighty.

(ii.) a progressive testimony.

THE [g]heavens declare the glory of the Mighty,
and the [h]expanse telleth the work of his hands.
[i]Day unto day poureth out speech:
and [j]night unto night breatheth knowledge.

[g] Job. 9. 9. Am. 5. 8. Isa. 40. 25, 26.
[h] Gen. 1. 6-8. Ps. 150. 1.
[i] Gen. 1. 14-19.
[j] Ps. 8. 3.

And in fact with the many this seems to have been very much the case; the retribution having now come — who can wonder? — in the one falling into the hands of the higher critic for exposition, the other into those of the Darwinian evolutionist. Scripture has not the responsibility of this, we may be sure; and our only hope is in coming back to Scripture.

1. Even the creed, which has been long called the apostles', and which, though not that, has expressed since the ninth century the faith of the western church, — nay, the Nicene, five centuries earlier, and put forth to maintain the divine glory of Christ, — both of these ascribe the work of creation only to the Father. The apostle Paul, on the other hand, declares of the Son, that "all things were created by Him, and for Him," (Col. i. 16); and the apostle John, that "by Him," as the "Word of God," the Revealer, "all things were made; and without Him was not anything made that was made." (John i. 3.) Thus if "the expanse telleth the work of *His* hands," we may well expect it not to be silent as to Him in whose Person only there has been full revelation made of God. And it *is not* silent: for the very orb that brings the day is, as we have long since learned, His symbol; and the night is constituted by the absence of this.

Creation is the earliest witness of God to man, though, as soon as man fell, he had need of, and in the mercy of God found, addition to it. If men turned their back on that, or corrupted it with their own folly, the witness of creation still remained, and they could not silence this. "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead: so that they are without excuse." (Rom. i. 20.)

Here it is the heavens alone that are brought forward in testimony, — those heavens so suggestive of infinity and power, to which in their paths the stars move in orderly subjection. "The heavens declare the glory of God," — *El*, "the Mighty"; "and the expanse telleth the work of His hands."

The testimony is continuous and progressive. One day adds its tale to that of another, and one night likewise to that which is gone before it. Never exhausted, the story never ends. The day with its multitudinous voices, subdued each by the very multitude of them, is like a river of speech flowing on continuously: while the night, with its quiet breathing, speaks in the hush perhaps more intelligibly to the more attentive ear.

Speech, then, the psalmist ascribes to creation; and he is earnest about it: he would have us know that he means fully what he says. It is "speech" and it is "words," he says, — really that: words, in spite of the sneer of the skeptic, — in spite of the dullness of the people of God themselves, — words really to be heard by those that listen for them. A poor, flat, unprofitable thing to say, affirms the higher critic of the day: out with it! what use in letting us know that words have meaning?* But, indeed, there is signal use in insisting upon

* So Cheyne, in his pretentious book upon the Psalms, in which the whole parade of modern learning is turned out to assure the simple believer how impossible it is for him to understand them aright apart from this. This writer has a gift for scenting the air of a certain period — especially the Maccabean — about a psalm, and knows by an instinct that cannot deceive him how impossible it is for a writer to rise — or be raised — above his "period." "Tempora mutan-

(iii.) to be realized.

(iv.) its universality.

It is [k]not speech nor words, whose voice cannot be heard.
Their [l]line* is gone out into all the earth,
and their words to the end of the habitable earth:
in them hath he set for the [m]sun a tent:

[k] *cf.* Rom. 1. 19, 20.

[l] *cf.* Rom. 10. 18.

[m] *cf.* Mal. 4. 2.

* The Septuagint gives "sound"; and this the apostle quotes in Rom. x.

that which, after all, is so feebly realized, or even understood. Granted there is something known as "natural theology" which students of divinity are supposed to study, and a few others know something about,—how much does the average Christian hear of this continual witness to God of the multitudinous voices of the day and night? How far are the natural sciences converted to God to-day? Still more must we ask, how far are they *Christianized?* What another thing would our lives be, if this were so!

True, the language here is parabolic: as such the Lord used it; in this way He took up nature, without apology,—sometimes without explanation. And when on a certain occasion He had done this, and the disciples appealed to Him for explanation, He rebuked them for their need of it. "Know ye not this parable?" He asked: "and how, then, will ye know *all* parables?" (Mark iv. 13.) Wonderful words, which show what He expects from us!—which show also what a wealth of understanding may be ours. If nature be in this way the very realm of parables, how then should nature lie open to us throughout its wide extent! How familiar, after all the centuries of acquaintance with it, should its voices sound to us! But, if we will not let Christ be the Teacher of natural things to us, it is not hard to prophesy who will slip into His seat, and teach us. For the strife between Christ and the devil allows of no neutrality: that which is not *for* Christ is

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tur, et nos mutamur in illis." We will let him give us a specimen of his method and results, as we find it in his recent volume of Bampton Lectures (pp. 191, 192):—

"Let this lecturer then say for himself that he cannot divide sharply between the age of David, and that, say, of Isaiah. The latter is no Christian, nor is the former a heathen. It is possible, that if we had a sufficient number of the more religious psalms of David, we might detect in them some real affinities to the religion of Isaiah [?!]. But it may be questioned whether these affinities would have struck an uncritical observer; and, above all, whether either David (who was not a church leader like Zoroaster) or even Isaiah could have dreamed of church hymns such as those contained in the Psalter. That David was a gifted musician is indeed attested, not only by the prophet Amos (vi. 5, but not according to the Septuagint), but by one of the very earliest historical traditions (1 Sam. xvi. 14–23), and we may assume that he could also, like the Arab prince-poet, Imra al Kais, as a 'sweet song-maker' (2 Sam. xxiii. 1) fascinate his half-primitive people. His poetry would, of course, be chiefly occasional in its character. The early races quickly fell into the moods of joy and grief, both of which required the services of the poet;" [for the services of the critic, now so essential, they could, it seems, somehow afford to wait!] "but, strange to say, passionately as the Israelites loved dancing (cf. I Sam. xx. 11, Jer. xxx. 19, xxxi. 4), the only two indubitably Davidic compositions are in the elegiac style. You know them full well: one is in 2 Sam. i. 19–27, the other in 2 Sam. iii. 33, 34. . . . But though these may be the only authentic specimens of David's work, and his posthumous fame rested chiefly upon his secular poetry (Amos vi. 5), we need not assume that all his compositions had a non-religious character."!!

This is from an "Oriel Professor of the *Interpretation of Holy Scripture*" at Oxford, and a Canon of Rochester. We do not propose to review it: it is a pyramid which will hardly stand upon its apex, as the audacious theorist imagines. It is solemn, indeed, to know that for a system which everywhere eliminates from Scripture that which makes it to be indeed "the word of God," the writer claims "the continual guidance both of the Church and of each faithful Christian by the Holy Spirit." (Bampton Lectures, p. xxv.) This, and "the principle of the Kenosis [or, as it has been lately paraphrased, the self-limitation] of the Divine Son" seem to Prof. Cheyne "the only possible foundation for a reform of apologetics suited to our English orthodoxy." One shrinks from putting this into the plain English necessary to convey it to any simple Christian. It means just this: that the only way of saving the mutilated Bible which may be left us by the critics from the contempt of infidelity, is to refer its *mutilation* to the Spirit of God acting in the critics, and leading them to a more advanced point of view than the Lord Himself, with the limitation of human ignorance to which He was pleased to condescend, ever attained!! This is, alas, to be now "our English orthodoxy"; and fearless criticism of the kind adduced is now to be urged as "fearless FAITH in the Paraclete." Surely the enemy of truth is "coming in like a flood." May the Spirit of the Lord lift up a standard against him!

(v.) capacity.

And he is as a [n]bridegroom coming forth from his chamber:
he rejoiceth as a [o]strong man to run [his] course.

(vi.) divine control.

His going forth is from the end of the heavens,
and his [p]circuit unto the ends of them;
and nothing is [q]hid from the heat thereof.

n *cf.* Is. 62.5.
o *cf.* Ruth 2. 1. *cf.* Matt. 28. 18.
p *cf.* Ps. 72.8.
q *cf.* Ps. 139. 7-12.

against Him; the unoccupied ground grows weeds and thorns and briars. Nature itself may teach us things like these.

Let us take the shame, then, of needing so simple a thing to be enforced, as that nature's speech is intended to be heard. As the universal witness, its doctrine is not intended to be esoteric, but for all. As a matter of fact, perverted though it be, the speech of all people is in nature's words. The rudest and the simplest use most its picture-signs. "Their line is gone out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."

Across these heavens, from his chamber in the ends of them, goes forth the unfailing sun; in perpetual vigor, spreading around the joy which is associated with his presence: for "a pleasant thing it is to behold the sun." His seems indeed the joy of strength,—the joy that springs out of realized competency. Always filling his place,—always full-orbed,—always the centre of light, though the clouds of earth may gather and shut him in,—always the centre of warmth, though the winter may build up its barrier of frost against him,—darkness and cold and death the sure result of his absence: if this be a parable then, is there any possible way but one in which to interpret it? Or does Scripture fail to reveal its meaning?

The Bridegroom coming forth of His chamber, who is at the same time the "Sun of righteousness" that "shall arise with healing in His wings," source of light, of life, of fruitfulness, to the whole earth rejoicing in His beams: shall we look at this picture and yet find Theism indeed, but not Christology, in nature's lessons? Or shall we speak slightingly of "parables" as after all merely the ingenious play of fancy, brilliant perhaps but unreal, not rooted in the nature of things? able to give, therefore, no deep, true, (if you will,) scientific glance into that nature? Nay: this is their real spiritual equivalent, and spirit is the essence of things, and gives the law of external nature. As it is said of Israel's history, that "all these things *happened* unto them for types," so it is true of nature that all these things are arranged and ordered so that it should be the true reflection of the glory of God;—so that its voices should tell Him forth. And instead of being unscientific, to follow this out would give us truest science, would relieve us of much that causes sorest perplexity, would bring the material and spiritual into perfect reconciliation, and God into everything that He has made. Is this to be desired? It is the one thing which gives all knowledge value. It is that which alone can establish science itself; nay, lift it up into the sphere of the eternal! It will be its immeasurable exaltation. Finally, it will make our Bible the unifier and key of every kind of knowledge, and Christ, in result, the sum of it. Is this, Christian reader, a thing desirable? Is it to you a thing *credible?* It is that of which the apostle assures us, that the knowledge of the "new man," "renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him," is that "Christ is ALL, and in all." (Col. iii. 10, 11.)

If this were apprehended, how would our minds be opened and enlarged to take in truth by every avenue open to us! What a guide should we have in those depths unexplorable by mere human intellect,—"the Spirit" that "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (1 Cor. ii. 10.) What a standard by which to judge of all the principles of science! What a confirmation of each by each as these two witnesses (His word and work) were brought into one harmonious testimony! What a satisfaction of the desires of the heart that pants after God!

Not in vain, then, has the psalmist put into his contemplation of the heavens

2 (7-11): The testimony of law. (i.) consistency and certainty. (ii.) discernment of difference.

The [r]law of Jehovah is perfect, restoring the soul: the [s]testimony of Jehovah is sure, making wise the simple.
The [t]precepts of Jehovah are right, rejoicing the heart:

[r] Ps. 1. 2.
[s] Ps.119.111.
[t] Ps.119.128.

this picture of the Ruler of the Day, this glorious source of energy for the earth, as the science of the time would not hesitate to speak of it. In doing this, he has but been preaching Christ to us from a text broad writ in the heavens. And it is sweet to turn back from this to the first chapter of Genesis, and to see how the books of nature and of Scripture begin together thus with the unfolding of Christ! The "light" of the first day, (which God is, in its spiritual significance,) put, on the fourth, upon its material candlestick, as the Old Testament revelation of God, becomes for us in the New the glory of the Only-begotten in the Man Christ Jesus. And here is what may assure us of the *science* of Moses, that it is sealed thus with the seal of the King of kings. Christ is in it, a living picture, a likeness speaking for itself as drawn by the Author of nature Himself, and so really still, day by day, pouring forth speech. Moses has only been the scribe recording this utterance; but a faithful one.

Service is blessed work when it is true, and Christ least of all disdains this character of Servant. In the fifth verse we see Him as this, keeping to His God-ordained course, His "circuit," which brings Him back to be in His place in the morning, the earth's timekeeper, as all else. Look but a little deeper, this may seem all upset: it is the earth that is turning upon itself, even while it circles around him; and this only establishes the true relation, after all, between the soul and Christ: to Him it owes its obedience, and revolves around Him, and fidelity to Him is the path in which we find Him, "faithful and true." Yet after all, the first thought was not untrue,—in some sense it was the truest. The tie between the earth and sun is mutual, as the law of gravity assures us, strongest upon the sun's side, which continually pours out upon the earth its fructifying light and heat, "nothing hid from the heat thereof." The "less is blessed of the better." Servant of God for us, Servant even to us in His love, this and His Lordship are not opposed or contrary in the Christ of God. While all our changes, (which, without due self-knowledge, may seem His,) all that they make known of us, do but approve His faithfulness to the ordained path of perfect wisdom and right government.

This is, of course, but an illustration,—a typical example of nature's teaching. It is all we can expect in this place. We are now to listen to another testimony.

2. Creation bears witness to God, who as Creator knows no difference of nations or of classes. Jew and Gentile are equal in His eyes, and men as a whole "His offspring." But they—not He—have got away from this. Hence, even in the interests of men at large, the call of Israel out from the nations, to be the conservator of truth from which on all sides they had departed, otherwise destined to be lost out of the world. Hence her necessary isolation, while yet in the centre of the great lines of the world's traffic: like one of her own cities of refuge, with its roads kept open on every side, and its safe keeping for the man who fled to it.

Israel's law was thus a testimony to Jehovah, Israel's God; who is of course also the Creator, the God of all, but driven, as it were, by the unbelief of men, into this exceptional place. Thus it is that with Israel alone is found the pure record of creation itself, which we find in Assyria and Babylonia overlaid with the perversions of men turning from the truth, and given up to fables. Abundant evidence is there in the comparison of these, that in the beginning the account was one, and that thus the truth they had, which they had given up. "When they *knew* God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."

(iii.) the realization in the soul.

the [u]commandment of Jehovah is pure, enlightening the eyes.
The [v]fear of Jehovah is clean, enduring for aye:
the [w]judgments of Jehovah are truth; they are righteous altogether.

[u] Ps. 12. 6. Ps. 34. 5.
[v] Ps. 34. 11. Ps. 111. 10.
[w] Ps. 119.75. Ps. 119.137.

Israel were in themselves no better, and not because of any betterness in them did God take them up. Among them also, if the truth were found, it was found in continual strife with the evil and unbelief of man. If it were maintained, it was maintained with a strong hand which chastened for iniquity. Their history is, as Moses testified against them, that of a stiff-necked and disobedient people; and to our own day what else has been the history of the professing people of God?

But He had in His heart purposes of love to man that must be fulfilled, which the ages slowly, because everything should be written large and fully before the eyes of the universe, and fixed on the tablets of eternal remembrance,—slowly indeed, yet continuously, were to work out. Israel in those purposes were the elect of God; and Jehovah, His covenant name with them, throws up, as a rampart against the power of evil, the pledge of His immutability and truth. His law is thus inflexible, as founded upon the holiness of His nature, and yet wedded indissolubly to these purposes of His grace. If it condemned and humbled, it was yet a "ministration"—a ministry of love—in doing this,—a "*ministration* of death" and "of condemnation." (2 Cor. iii. 7, 9.) In itself "holy, just, and good," it was the delight of the renewed nature. But the effect was, on this very account, the humbling of man before God, the abasement of all self-righteousness, and thus in the end the preparation for the gospel of salvation.

The testimony of the law has then its right place just here in this nineteenth psalm, where it is found; and found in this double character also, as testimony to the holiness of God, and so searching the heart before God. In the next psalm we go on to the salvation for the reception of which the way is thus prepared.

"The law of Jehovah is perfect, restoring the soul": "converting," in the broader sense of the word, would not be wrong,—that is, turning it from any wrong path. *Torah*, "the law," means literally that which points out the way; and as "perfect" it is an infallible guide. Its certainty for guidance is therefore what is here declared. The soul as the impulsive part of man's nature is that which needs to be turned or restrained from following its own inclinations, and so is named here. How blessed to have the certainty which is found in listening to God's voice. It is the first point of all, clearly, for blessing. Apart from this, wisdom and folly, holiness and unholiness, are names, and nothing else. We seek to please God, and know not but we offend Him. The road we take to heaven may, after all, be the road to hell: for "there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, and the end thereof are the ways of death." (Prov. xiv. 12.) When God has spoken, and we have heard His voice, our path then becomes that of simple obedience; we are not left to prove it by results, which come all too late for help as to what is before us. Results, so far as these can be depended on even, testify but of what, being past, is already beyond recall.

But in God's path,—realizing that we are there,—results are in His hand. "The servant knoweth not what his lord doeth"; but the servant of God may be well assured that power is in His hand to carry out the purposes of unfailing wisdom. He may be at rest therefore. "Great peace have they that love Thy law, and nothing shall stumble them." (Ps. cxix. 165, *marg.*)

This is what, first of all,—priceless boon it is!—the law of the Lord secures: a heart at rest. One may not know the future; but he knows his present Guide: and the future can have no disappointment or surprise for Him who sees the end from the beginning.

And to this the second part of the verse here corresponds. "The *testimony* of Jehovah" takes quite different ground from that of the "law." Its appeal is not, as that of the latter, to *authority*, but to fact and truth; and "the testimony of

(iv.) the testimony of experience.

(v.) exercise and reward.

More desirable are they than [x]gold—than much fine gold:
sweeter also than [y]honey, even the dropping of the combs.
By them also is thy servant [z]warned:
in keeping them the [a]reward is great.

3 (12-14): The fully realized result.

(i.) conviction.

[b]Who understandeth his errors?
free me from things [c]hidden [from me].

x Ps. 119.72. 127. *cf.* Acts 3.6. *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 10.
y Ps. 119.103. *cf.* Rev. 10. 9.
z *cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17.
a *cf.* Rev. 3. 8, 10, 12. *cf.* Rev. 22. 7.

cf. Jno. 14. 23, 24. b *cf.* 1 Jno. 1. 10; *cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 4. c *cf.* Lev. 4. 2; *cf.* Ps. 90. 8.

Jehovah is *sure*," beyond possibility of overthrow. His are the lips of truth: to Him who is the Omnipotent it is yet an impossibility to lie; day to day, night to night, gather a constantly increasing experience which proclaims His faithfulness. So that His testimony "maketh wise the simple" or inexperienced, with the wisdom of experience. Faith, then, is not credulity. It is not necessary to it to shut one's eyes. He who is Light leads in the light. Question, scrutinize, use every faculty that He has given: they shall not be put to shame; only o'erpassed, as finite by the Infinite, and blessed and drawn out by the very overpassing. Not a soul brought to God but the intellect expands as the heart does. Christ dwelling within must needs enlarge the place of His dwelling. His testimony received makes wise the simple.

The next couplet speaks of moral discernment, putting a difference; but the terms used are not exactly what we are accustomed to, and need to be put together according to the parallelism, in order to be clearly seen. We have here on the one hand, not the law as a whole, but its "precepts,"—the details in which, with "line upon line," the application of its principles is made to all the circumstances of daily life. These concrete forms more clearly show us the principles they embody, and the "commandment of Jehovah," though not a plural, is only meant in this way to individualize more thoroughly the single precept.

The precepts of Jehovah are right; the commandment of Jehovah is pure: thus we have now moral character. What connects itself with these respectively is that the right precepts "rejoice the heart," the pure commandment "enlightens the eyes." The parallelism is here thought to be maintained by the latter phrase being taken as indicating revival, refreshment, as when Jonathan tasted the honey in the wood, it is said that "his eyes were lightened." The numerical structure seems to plead for a different meaning, and one more consonant perhaps with the parallelism itself, which should not be mere repetition but advance in significance. In Ephesians we find (ch. i. 18, R. V.) "having the eyes of your heart enlightened,"—an expression which connects the two parts of this together. The heart is indeed that which largely governs the eyes; and the joy of the heart in Jehovah's precepts enables the eyes to discern aright. From the opposite of this all error, in fact, proceeds.

In the third parallel, in harmony with its numerical significance, we come to the principle which underlies all this, which is "the fear of Jehovah" Himself, and which is "clean,"—frees from the defilement which forbids approach to or communion with Him. Thus it has the real elements of endurance in it: for the favor of God has that; what is in harmony with His mind abides. So also the judgments of Jehovah, to which the fear of Him causes us to cling, are truth; and thus, according to the primary meaning of the word, firm and stable. "They are righteous altogether": and "the righteous is an everlasting foundation." (Prov. x. 25.)

From all this comes the value that experience sets upon these divine words.—"more desirable than gold."—much of it and refined; and for enjoyment, sweeter to the taste than the purest honey, that which drops and is not pressed out of the comb.

Conscience also is exercised by them: a thing which the true servant of God is able to appreciate. Happy is he who can invite the light of God's word to

(ii.) fear of presumptuous sin.

Keep back thy servant also from [d]presumptuous [sins];
let them not have dominion over me:
then shall I be [e]upright:
I shall be innocent of great revolt.

(iii.) desire of sanctification.

Let the [f]utterance of my mouth and the [g]meditation
of my heart be acceptable before thee,
Jehovah my [h]Rock and my Redeemer.

d Nu. 15. 30.
e Ps. 7. 10. Ps. 33. 1.
f Ps. 34. 13. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 22.
g Ps. 49. 3. Ps. 104. 34.
h Ps. 18. 2.

search out all his heart, shunning no ray of it. The "reward" found is both one present and to come,—in that day when no reserve will be possible any longer.

3. The third and last section of the psalm is a prayer to God Himself, into whose presence the soul has thus been brought, to find itself naked and open to Eyes that see beyond all that the fullest self-consciousness can be aware of. And these inaccessible depths, what are they? What may appear in them, when the secrets of all hearts shall be exposed? Alas, it is not because of their profundity, but because of their tortuous labyrinths comes the difficulty—the impossibility—of exploration: "the heart is deceitful above all things . . . who can know it?"

Our comfort, then, must be in turning away from ourselves to Him in whom we can have a confidence that in ourselves we cannot; and in the knowledge that He fully knows us, yet turns not from us because of what He knows. We can understand the joy of the woman of Samaria, who had found the Christ in Him who had told her all things she had done. But He had first opened to her the heart of God, and assured her of her welcome to Him. Grace had heralded the truth to her, and made her glad to have it told her.

So here, with the conviction "who understandeth his errors?" the psalmist turns in confidence to God with the prayer, "Free me from things hidden from me." Sins are not harmless because unknown. They are still *sins*, as witness the law of sacrifice. (Lev. iv. 2, 13, etc.) The dust of a defiling world settles down on us silently, and the mirror of conscience is dulled ere we are aware. The basin and towel in the Lord's hand (John xiii.) are requisite, not when we are conscious of evil merely, but because we are too little conscious. Hardening is not only by the open front of sin: for the Christian it is more generally through its deceitfulness. (Heb. iii. 13.) Satan does not in general present himself as Satan, nor sin as sin; but the dress changes nothing of its character.

Between sins of ignorance and presumptuous sins there is, of course, an immense difference. While all sin is, as already said, sin, and the want of knowledge can never justify us, with God's word in our hand, and Himself so accessible for our enlightenment, yet a sin committed in real ignorance does not shut out God as a sin against conscience does. If it were so, communion would be impossible to any, short of practical perfection. But He is tender and merciful, and of infinite compassion. It would not be this to pass over that which argues a spirit of "revolt," which trifles with His known will. Here, too, we must take care; for we may trifle with His will by refusing to *seek* the light, as well as by refusing to walk by it when we have it. And this, one must fear, is the cause of many blighted lives among the children of God. They do not know, indeed, the evil paths they are in, but they have, nevertheless, as it were instinctively, turned from and *refused the knowledge*. Not willing to be disturbed, or to abide the cost of truth, they give up seeking it,—at least, in the dreaded line. But they cannot so escape from the consequences, terrible as some day they will find them, of real disobedience.

We can find our safeguard only in the sanctuary. The Lord Himself is our constant necessity; and the self-distrust is wholesome that keeps us close to Him. So the cry here now: "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins: let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright; I shall be innocent of great revolt." And the psalm ends with the longing desire for positive sanctification,—the acceptance of heart and mouth before God,—this God, known in the power of His salvation ever (John iv. 22),—"Jehovah, my Rock and my Redeemer."

Ps. xx.

1 (1-3): God for Christ.

(i.) in consistency with His grace.

(ii.) twofold help.

[2]PSALM XX.

Christ and His salvation.

To the chief musician: a psalm of David.

JEHOVAH shall answer thee in the [t]day of strait:
the name of the God of [j]Jacob set thee on high:
He shall send thee help from the [k]sanctuary,
and uphold thee out of [l]Zion!

[t] Ps. 22. 11.
[j] *cf.* Is. 41.8, 14.
[k] 1 Ki. 8. 27-30. *cf.* Rom. 6. 4. *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 21.
[l] Ps. 2. 6. Ps. 3. 4.

PSALM XX.

With the last word of the nineteenth psalm is struck the key-note of that which follows. This is truly a blessed psalm, and its beauty will be seen the more, the more we contemplate it. Not that there is much wonder about that: the lustre of all God's jewels is only dimmed by our indifference.

The two psalms now before us are Jewish, no doubt: and the lack of the apprehension of this causes much of the difficulty of discerning their true character. We have to distinguish between the form and the essence,—or rather, to give frankly to the ancient people of God all that belongs to them; and by so doing we shall surely find what is our own, and of how little we have deprived ourselves by this mere justice. The Gentile's Christ is also Israel's Messiah; and wherever we find Him we have our inalienable title to and interest in Him. On His head are many crowns; but these can surely not obscure the features with which we are familiar.

The twentieth psalm speaks of Christ and His salvation, objectively given, as contemplated by the people, and not, as in the twenty-second, subjectively, as the language and experience of the Lord Himself. This, as has been said before, is the manner of the middle three of the nine psalms of which this is the central one, and which show us faith's reception of the Messiah. The prophecy is here as direct as Isaiah's picture of Jehovah's Servant, (chap. lii. 13–liii.,) and should be given as direct announcement, and not, as in our common version, as a prayer. The nine verses are, as usual with this number, 3 x 3, the symbol of divine fullness and manifestation intensified by repetition: from which the importance of its contents may be anticipated.

1. The first section declares God to be for "His Anointed," who is seen in the day of His "strait," which is that of His "offering." This Anointed is the King of Israel, whose deliverance is in some way the salvation of His people, and seems to bring their hearts back to the remembrance of Jehovah their God; and thus they "rise and stand upright." There is no difficulty in seeing that, however else the psalm may have had partial fulfillment, Christ alone is the complete one. And this interpretation it is that gives it its place in the series of psalms that we are considering. The partial ones, taken as the whole, if they could be satisfactorily and not merely conjecturally made out, would break up the unity of the book, as well as lower immeasurably the character of the fragments remaining. How insignificant these "offerings" and this "burnt sacrifice" of a king in his "strait," were it Uzziah or Asa or David himself, compared with that *one* sacrifice of the glorious King, who is always the great subject of the Spirit's testimony.

Looked at in this way, a flood of light is thrown upon the psalm which transfigures it completely. In the very first verse thus, where the king is seen in his strait, it is the "*name* of the God of Jacob" that sets him on high. This is then only another reading of the New Testament text that "Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father." (Rom. vi. 4.) God's "name" is His glory: it is the display of Himself. It is this that is the blessedness of the gospel, that God is displayed in it in His grace. Here, too, the God of Jacob, when we realize the meaning of this name, Jacob, and remember the history in connection with it, which the book of Genesis so dwells upon, may well stand for—indeed can stand for nothing else but—the God of grace. Grace alone could

(iii.) In remembrance of His offering.

He shall remember all thine [m]offerings,
and accept thy [n]burnt offerings. Selah.

2 (4-6): His deliverance involving that of His people.

He shall give thee according to thy [o]heart,
and fulfill all thy counsel.

(i.) the counsel of His heart.

We will rejoice in [p]thy salvation,
and in the name of our God set up our [q]banners:
Jehovah shall fulfill all thy [r]requests.

(ii.) faith linking itself with Him.

m Lev. 2. 1, etc. *cf.* Heb. 7. 26.
n Lev. 1. 3, etc. *cf.* Eph. 5. 2.
o Ps. 21. 2. *cf.* Jno. 17. 24.
p *cf.* Ps. 18. 17-19 with Ps. 18. 43.
q Ex. 17. 15. Ps. 60. 4.
r *cf.* Heb. 7. 25.

take up the "supplanter" to make of him an Israel, a "prince of God." Thus it is for the declaration of God's grace,—of the gospel in its essence,—that the One seen here is delivered from His strait,—is set on high. The resurrection and ascension of Christ give to this its full and blessed significance. The story is that of God's grace, whether it be in the going forth of the gospel in its fullness now, or in the deliverance of Israel in days to come. It is still the work of Christ that is the foundation of all blessing, and by which the glory of God is displayed in abounding grace.

In the second verse there is a twofold answer implied; for the sanctuary and Zion are in different lines of thought. The one is the place of priesthood; the other the seat of royal power. Christ is both Priest and King; but then, in connection with Him, the sanctuary in the midst of Israel can be no more than "the figure of the true:" and this is plainly declared in the sixth verse, where the answer of God is "from His holy heaven." This is the answer with which we are now, blessed be His name, familiar. But we have taken it in such a way as to discredit the other, and to make a difficulty where there is absolute simplicity. Christ is yet to be answered out of Zion,—the kingly power in Israel put into His hand. Indeed in that day the two answers will be brought into fullest agreement: the "priest after the order of Melchizedek" will be a "priest upon His throne." The grace implied in priesthood will be manifested in Him who reigns with absolute power; and this will be full blessing for the people of His choice.

The third verse, Leviticus-like, shows us the basis of all this in sacrifice. The whole range of offerings here comes in; for what less could show the various perfection of the one offering that has once for all put away sin for every soul that trusts it? but yet the burnt-offering holds before God its special place. No wonder! It is that which tells of the perfectly tried obedience found perfect, all of its sweet savor brought out by the fierceness of the flame consuming it.

How blessed a picture is given us then in these three verses! how impossible for it to *be* the picture of any other than the One whom it so admirably portrays!

2. We have now the effect of this interposition of God for Him in the deliverance and blessing of His people. This is not, however, what we shall find, when His work is fully told out—forgiveness and salvation from sin. He is their King, and His being raised up naturally connects itself with their deliverance. That this is, and must be, in grace, we have already seen; but this is, as yet, more national than individual, and the depths of their need are not as yet explored.

We find at once, however, that there are counsels of His heart, though what these are is left to be inferred by what follows. They are worthy of that work which lays the ground of their accomplishment; and the people, rejoicing in His deliverance, set up their banners in that Name which has been declared to them,—the name of Jacob's God, the God of grace. There is certainly here a national movement, in the face of enemies, but with confidence; and evidently in His advocacy with whose requests their hearts go out in sympathy. Faith in them has linked itself with Him, and that faith expresses itself in joyful certainty, in the voice of a believing nation in the latter day. These are now receiving the testimony with which the psalm began, and the faith of the prophet in the first part of it is answered at last by that of a generation to be new born to God in days yet to

(iii.) the answer from heaven.

Now know I that Jehovah saveth his [s]anointed:
he answereth him from his holy heaven
with the saving power of his right hand.

3 (7-9): Israel remembering God.

(i.) God alone.

[t]Some [boast] of chariots, and some of horses,
but we will remember the name of Jehovah our God.

(ii.) contrasted issues.

They are [u]bowed down and fallen:
but we are risen and stand upright.

(iii.) the King manifested.

Save, Jehovah!
let the [v]king hear us when we call.

[s] Ps. 2. 2.

[t] Ps. 33. 16, 17. Isa. 31. 1. *cf.* Judg. 4. 15.

[u] Ps. 18. 38.

[v] *cf.* Ps. 2. 6. Ps. 21. 1.

come. The transition here will be no difficulty to those who have noted the similar style of prophecy elsewhere.* Thus Israel will yet awake to the acceptance with God of Him whom as the Crucified they have refused and scorned. They have heard as yet but the Voice which cried, "Thou hearest not," and to that which presently said, "Thou hast heard Me," they have been deaf and unbelieving. At last the "Ephphatha" will be uttered which will give ears and tongue alike their office, and they will say, "Now I know that Jehovah saveth His Anointed! He answereth Him from His holy heaven, with the saving strength of His right hand."

3. The third section must be characterized as the resurrection of Israel. We see them in fact brought back to God, as through faith in Christ they will be, with the necessary effect of this, that they find God for them. The last verse, if we are to read it according to the common punctuation, goes on to the further discovery, full indeed of blessing, that Messiah, their King, and Jehovah are the same: a truth certainly not beyond the Psalms to give, and which we shall find fully before us in the fourth book.

The name of God is once more uttered by them here. Well may they be glad to remember it now, after so long a time of forgetfulness. Now no earthly confidence will they boast in, but only in Jehovah. The sure result follows: while other hopes deceive, Jehovah manifests Himself for them. Their enemies (these boasters) are brought down and fallen. Israel rises from her sorrow and degradation; and not temporarily merely: they rise and stand upright.

The psalm ends with a prayer, in which Jehovah is invoked still to deliver, a prayer which the "King" is besought to hear. Jehovah and the King are one!

Psalm XXI.

The third psalm of this intermediate series now pictures Christ in His glory; although, when we look first at it in this light, there is natural disappointment. The view is still Jewish; and the glory, while indeed heavenly, or it would not be His, is seen, however, from an earthly stand-point. As in the Lord's words to Nathanael, Israel sees heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending [in attendance] upon the Son of man. A blessed thing to see, and which many Christians scarcely reach, and yet which is not entrance into those opened heavens themselves. But there is the joy of seeing One on whom the angels wait, who is still "Son of *man*," who speaks of Himself in this way, is not ashamed of it, not ashamed of human "brethren" in those who are sanctified by His blood! Is it not true that hazy, indistinct views of Christ as man in heaven cause many to lose how much of such joy as this? Yet upon this depends the distinct realization of our place in Him, which cannot be as God but as Man only.

Of this place "in Him" also the Psalms (along with the Old Testament generally) make no explicit mention. (Eph. iii. 4–6.) It is here the Anointed King,

* Thus in Isaiah lii. 13–liii. 3 there is a similar transition from the future and the personating by the prophet of the unbelief (as here the faith) of a generation to come.

Ps. xxi.

[3]PSALM XXI.

Christ appearing in His glory.

To the chief musician: a psalm of David.

1 (1-3): The King's might.
(i.) Jehovah His strength.
(ii.) His desire met.
(iii.) crowned with glory.

A [w]KING rejoiceth in thy strength, Jehovah:
and in thy salvation how greatly shall he exult!
The desire of his [x]heart hast thou given him,
and hast not withholden the request of his lips. Selah.
For thou meetest him with blessings of prosperity:
thou settest a [y]crown of pure gold upon his head.

w *cf.* Ps. 20. 9. Ps. 45. 1. Ps. 18. 2, etc. Ps. 40. 1, etc.
x Ps. 20. 4.
y *cf.* Isa. 53. 12. *cf.* Heb. 2. 7, 9.

King of Israel and the earth,—a glorious thing, too, to contemplate! to have the whole world obedient to Him, and the precious fruits of the obedience found. We too can sing with Israel here, and ought to be able to take a note above them.

As to the structure of the psalm, there are three parts in it: two of three verses each which show us His higher glory; and then a third and longer one of seven which speaks of His manifestation upon earth, which is the day of manifestation also as to the earth itself, and of putting things straight; the wicked, His enemies, being rooted out of it.

1. The first section speaks of His might, which is that of Jehovah also. He joys in Jehovah's strength, and exults in His salvation. We see that His manhood is still insisted on, all judgment being committed to Him because He is the Son of man. (John v. 27.) He has given in Himself the perfect pattern of obedience, and thus has moral title to receive obedience. He requires no more than He yields; nay, He has yielded more than He ever requires. His path to the throne has been by the way of the Cross. The thorns gathered out of man's path have made a crown for Him. He has not sought exaltation for Himself, who needed it not, but has stooped with infinite condescension to accept the government which is laid upon His shoulders, and which He takes that He may minister in it to the needs of men His creatures, and fulfill the Divine counsel of grace and blessing.

Thus the might of God is His. He knows the secret of power, and has acquired it; as we also, in our measure, may acquire it. For who can lack power whose simple and supreme desire is to do the will of God in the conviction of its absolute goodness, and to glorify Him? Alas, we seek power, and make impossible the attainment of it by reason of the motive for which we seek it. If we had it, and used it not for Him, we should use it against Him,—use it therefore for mischief every way, and for misery to ourselves. Why then should He who is as wise as good impart it to us? Would we put the energy of steam into an engine off the track? Is He less wise than we?

But here is One fully proved and perfectly trustworthy; "the desire of His heart hast Thou given Him, and hast not denied Him the request of His lips." Nothing simpler possible than that! "If ye abide in Me, and *my words abide in you*, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." (John xv. 7.) That is positive enough, and simple; a perfect account of prevailing prayer. His words form the desires and govern the heart; the will is perfect and so the prayer prevails. Christ the Lord, even upon the throne, is an Example for us, exceptional only as His perfection is exceptional.

It is this satisfaction of His desires that we see, therefore, in the third verse. He is met on God's part with blessings that are really such: a crown of pure gold is set upon His head. What is this but the glory of God, which it is His, as now enthroned, to accomplish? for this was the desire of His heart, and this is what the figure naturally means: (figure, of course, it must be, as a prophecy of Christ). This is in fact the very meaning of His reign, that as by man sin had entered to His dishonor, so by man also shall the evil be undone, to His eternal praise. Thus too shall His work in creation be vindicated, and the creation itself be linked to God forever. Christ is thus the "Father of eternity."

2 (4-6): The *shared* blessings of His dependence.
(i.) eternal life.
(ii.) the greatness of His salvation.
(iii.) the presence of God.

3 (7-13): His manifestation.
(i.) the cause of His unchanging strength.
(ii.) His hand upon His enemies.
(iii.) the day of His manifestation.
(iv.) rooted out of the earth.
(v.) the reason in divine goverument.

He asked [z]life of thee,—thou hast given it him:
length of days for [a]ever and aye.
His glory is great in thy salvation:
[b]honor and majesty thou puttest on him.
For thou settest him [in] [c]blessings for aye:
thou dost [d]gladden him with joy in thy presence.

For the king is he that [e]trusteth in Jehovah:
and in the loving-kindness of the Highest he shall not be moved.
Thy hand shall [f]find out all thine enemies:
thy right hand find out those that hate thee.
Thou wilt set them as [in] a [g]fiery furnace in the time of thy coming:
Jehovah shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them.
Their fruit shalt thou [h]destroy from the earth,
and their seed from among the sons of men.
For they spread out [i]evil for thee:
they devised a plot they could not [effect.]

z Ps. 61. 5, 6, 7. *cf.* Col. 3. 3, 4.
a *cf.* Ps. 72. 15, 17. *cf.* Heb. 1. 11.
b *cf.* Heb. 2. 9. *cf.* Phil. 2. 9.
c *cf.* Ps. 72. 17.
d *cf.* Ps. 45. 7. *cf.* Acts 2. 28. *cf.* Heb. 12. 2.
e *cf.* Ps. 16. 1.
f *cf.* Ps. 18. 37, 38.
g Ps. 2. 12. Mal. 4. 1. Matt. 3. 12.
h Ps. 109. 12. *cf.* 2 Thess. 1. 8, 9.
i *cf.* Acts 2. 23, 24. *cf.* Ps. 2. 1.

2. The second part insists on this dependent place which He has assumed as man. Gone down into death, even life itself He receives as the gift of God; a life eternal, which becomes thus the portion of the new creation, to which He is Head. "His salvation" becomes in the same way a true salvation of myriads of people, by which it becomes great indeed, and great His glory. And these eternal blessings find their consummation in the presence of God which He for them enters, and to which they find access also in Him. Thus, in this second part, the effects are seen of that dependent place which He has taken: for all these, unlike those of the first section, are *shared* blessings, blessings which are such to Him in the very fact that they are earned for others. And though this is left for us to discover, and not plainly interpreted; yet in the light of the New Testament interpretation is easy. In all these things He is the Representative of others; and to be this—the Saviour of multitudes who shall adore Him forever.—this without question is that wherein "His glory is great in Thy salvation." We pass on now to what is very different from all this.

3. Yet even in His appearing in glory we are kept in mind of the place He has taken, a dependent place, of which He is not ashamed. His unchanging stability of glory is the answer to that trust in Jehovah's steadfastness which in the depths to which He descended never for a moment wavered. As He believed, so is it done to Him. His sure faith finds the Rock it rests on, and is answered, as one may truly say, by a faith in Him on God's side which can commit all divine interests to the care of Him in whom the Father's delight is. How all through this psalm the "Leader and finisher of faith" is seen, even in the most unlikely places! The principles which are indicated all through apply to us as to Him, only to Him are principles ever declaring His supreme excellency; and this is as it must be.

Now His hand finds out all His enemies: none can escape, when the eye that seeks them is omniscient. The time of His coming is that which is ordained for the destruction of the banded opposition against Jehovah and His Christ which we have found in the second psalm, and which will be then, as all prophecy witnesses, in fullest activity. The destruction will be sudden and complete, as pictured in these vivid images. Fruit and seed shall alike perish from the earth, for the time of its deliverance from oppression is now come,—the time to "destroy those that destroy the earth." (Rev. xi. 18.)

The cause of this action of the divine power is stated in the eleventh verse: it

(vi.) baffled. For thou makest them [j] wheel around*:
against their face thou preparest thy bowstrings.
(vii.) Be thou [k] exalted in thy strength, Jehovah:
we will [l] sing and praise thy power.

[j] Ps. 18. 40.
[k] Ps.57.5,11. Ps. 108. 5.
[l] Ps. 95. 1.

* *Literally*, "turn their shoulder."

is their malice against Christ, which, as we know, may be shown in the persecution of His people. (Acts ix. 4, and comp. Matt. xxv. 45.) In fact, the Israelitish remnant will be plucked from the very jaws of their adversaries at the appearing of the Lord. (Zech. xiv.) The following verse may well speak of the discomfiture of these baffled foes.

The psalm ends with a prayer that Jehovah would display His strength after this manner; and His people will praise Him for delivering power.

Series 3.

We have now come to the final series of these psalms, the Leviticus part, in which, as in that book, the heart of atonement is laid bare to us, which is indeed, though in so strange a manner, the heart of God Himself: God in His holiness; God in His wondrous love. In both respects the first psalm here declares Him; and the joy of this sounds out to the ends of the earth. In the second psalm, the present ministry of love is dwelt upon, the great Shepherd of the sheep, having been brought again from the dead through the blood of the everlasting covenant, those led of Him find overflowing blessing. In the third psalm, the end is reached: not heaven, for these psalms contemplate, as we know, the earthly people, but what is nearest it on earth, the entrance into Jehovah's house, and standing in His holy place. With this the whole series of Messianic psalms here naturally closes.

Psalm XXII.

The twenty-second psalm is in some respects the most remarkable in the whole book of Psalms. The absorption of the psalmist into the person of Him whom he represents is so complete that from hence arise the difficulties of interpreters, with whom the mere human element has darkened all the glory of the divine. Let the meaning of the first six verses of the psalm be really grasped, there is but One to whom it can refer: David himself is as entirely out of the question as any other. If it be the essence of atonement that is here before us, is it David or any other, save the Christ of God who could make atonement for my sins? Here to look round for any partial anticipation or suggestive circumstances is entirely out of place: the fact here is unique in human history. If the psalm be David's, David is lifted entirely off his feet here, is taken out of all his surroundings, by the power of that Spirit who, he tells us, spake by him, and whose word was on his tongue. And this is an instructive warning, that the Spirit of God is not bound by the limits of the human instrument He is pleased to use. The New Testament applies the psalm thus in the most positive and exclusive way to the Lord Himself; and His adoption of the opening words, with the way in which these are connected in Scripture, and the connection of the psalm itself here with the surrounding psalms, all these unite to fix the interpretation in such a way as that none shall be able to take from it its rightful meaning, except as wresting it manifestly. It is a keystone in the divine foundation upon which the whole structure of truth is built; and God has taken care to have an immovable foundation.

It shows us, as already said, the very essence of atonement, the concord of divine righteousness and grace in the work of the Cross, which it is the very glory of the gospel to proclaim, but which is the result of unique suffering. The foundation of peace is laid in the lowest depths of darkness, that it may support a structure reaching to heaven itself, and giving access to God in confidence and joy of faith. May we enter into all the fullness of what is here opened to us!

The title of this psalm is noteworthy. *Aijeleth Shahar*, which our common version leaves untranslated, means the "hind of the dawn," a very peculiar expression, of which, apart from its context here, one might well doubt the significance. It refers, however, as Delitzsch remarks, according to traditional definition to "the early light preceding the dawn of the morning, whose first rays are likened to the horns of a hind." He adds that "there is a determination of the time to this effect, found both in the Jerusalem and in the Babylonian Talmud, 'from the hind of the morning's dawn till the east is lighted up.'" Nor is the application which is so simple to us as Christians, strange to Jewish exposition. As Delitzsch says again, "Even the synagogue, so far as it recognizes a suffering Messiah, hears Him speak here; and takes the 'hind of the morning' as a name of the Shechina (Israel's glory-cloud), and as a symbol of the dawning redemption." "And the Targum recalls the lamb of the morning sacrifice, which was offered as soon as the watchman on the pinnacle of the temple cried out, 'The first rays of the morning burst forth.'"

Certain it is that this psalm points to the true meeting-place of the darkness and the dawn; and the added figure of the hind, while not directly speaking of sacrifice, suggests naturally the suffering of one chased by the hunters, the picture of meek innocence exposed to the fury of such persecutors as the psalm images by dogs and lions. And yet in a mystery which invites our reverent inquiry, that which is thus connected with the darkness, is no less identified with the uprise of the blessed day. How many tender and wonderful associations are there here for us! And to whom alone do they lead us as the subject of contemplation in this most precious scripture, indited by the Holy Ghost?

1. There are twenty-one verses in the first part of the psalm, which gives us the atoning work itself: a number surely significant, especially when we compare it with the thirty-six verses of the trespass-offering psalm, the sixty-ninth. The trespass-offering, as we have seen when looking at it, is the *governmental* offering, as the idea of restitution in it shows, and that according to a precise estimate of the injury made; and thirty-six—the number of the books of the Old Testament, or "law,"—gives us, as 3 x 12 (the divine and governmental numbers), "God in government." The present psalm speaks of the *sin*-offering, in which the divine nature is in question, not the divine government; and 21 is naturally 3 x 7, the emphatic expression of a divine and perfect work.

It does not follow from this, however, that the subdivision of these twenty-one verses will correspond with this; and, in fact, it does not. There is much else to be expressed, as we shall find; and the minor divisions here are five in number, the verses standing respectively to these as 3.5.3.7.3; the *threes* guiding us to the divine aspect of what is here, as we might suppose. Every feature is perfect, we may be sure. If we are not able to discern it, let us not charge God with what is due to our shortsightedness, and nothing else.

This first division of the psalm is best characterized by one word which at the same time reveals the depth into which the Lord has descended for us, and along with this His glory who could descend there, charged with the fulfillment of all the divine counsels, with the revelation in that utter darkness of all the glory of God; standing where no foot but His could stand, and laying there the foundations of new creation, never to be disturbed; giving the creature steadfast happiness and God His rest. "*Alone*" He did this: in human weakness, yet in divine strength, "alone" in a place where no foot had trodden before, which none will tread again. To Him only could there be such desolation; the very height of His essential majesty made but part of the infinite horror, which no soul beside could have room for but His own. Let us bow our heads—let us challenge the deepest reverence of our hearts—while we gaze but at the outside of that into which we can never enter, even within but its outer margin; which it is the glory of His work to have made it impossible for us ever to enter.

(*a*) In the first three verses the meaning of what follows is declared to us: the nature of the suffering as distinguishing it from all other; the cause of it.

SERIES 3. (Ps. xxii.–xxiv.)
Atonement and its Results.

Ps. xxii.

[1]PSALM XXII.

The concord of divine righteousness and grace through the work of a Unique Sufferer.

To the chief musician, concerning the *m* Hind of the Dawn; a psalm of David.

1 (1–21): Alone.
a (1–3): the ground of the whole.
(1.) why?

[n]MY God,* my God, [o]why hast thou [p]forsaken me? far from saving me—[from] the [q]words of my groaning!

* In both places "El", elsewhere translated "Mighty."

m cf. Gen. 49. 21 with 1 Cor. 15. 20.
n Matt. 27. 46. Mk. 15. 34. *ctr.* Lk. 23. 46.
o cf. Is. 53. 5. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 21.
p cf. Zech. 13. 7. *cf.* Mk. 15. 33. *cf.* Heb. 13. 11, 12.
q cf. Heb. 5. 7.

The Sufferer Himself puts and answers the question, Why is this? And it is strange, indeed, how little has been understood of what is so clearly put before us. Yet not to understand it is to miss the full meaning of atonement itself. The cry here the Lord made His own, as all know, in the hour of His agony upon the Cross, a time exceptional wholly in its character, and not to be confounded with any other in His earthly history. Nowhere else was He the sin-bearer. Not thus in that blessed life of His, which such a shadow would have changed how sorrowfully for us, did He stand in our place, our Substitute, but "bare our sins in His own body *on the tree.*" (1 Pet. ii. 14.) Surely, one would imagine, this for Christians scarcely could need statement, much less emphasis; and yet it *does* need. For what does it mean or imply, this bearing of sin? Joy, peace, communion, the light of God's countenance? Or darkness, agony, the awful horror of being "made a curse"? Could these things go on together? Or are they so near akin that one could be confounded with the other?

Here, then, from lips that could not possibly mistake, and in the hour of His greatest need, when rejected, scorned, abused, crucified by man, He needed all the enjoyment of that favor of God, in the sense of which He had walked continually;—here, in the presence of those who in the malice of their hearts were saying, "There is no salvation for Him with God":—here, beyond their uttermost thoughts, as if to justify all that they had done against Him, is His own testimony that God had forsaken Him! Yet He had said beforetime to His enemies, "And He that sent Me is with Me; the Father hath not left Me alone: for I do always the things that please Him." (John viii. 29.) Now was the time which He had seemed to have before Him then: they had with bold and insulting hands "lifted up the Son of Man" (ver. 28); they had, as it were, with their judgment pronounced upon Him, offered Him up to God for His ratification of their deed. "Let Him deliver Him," they said, "if He will have Him": and the heavens had darkened, not (as, after all, they had dreaded) in anger against *them*, but, as His own voice now interpreted it for them, in sign that God had forsaken *Him!*

Yet the voice asked, "Why?" Did He expect, then, some answer from that God who had forsaken Him? But answer had not come: they at least heard none. Still the awful burden hung upon the tree. He had saved others: yes, they knew that! Nevertheless now the hands hung powerless. He could not save Himself. Yet *why* could not He who had saved others save Himself? Had *they* not some interest in that unanswered question of His?

They might have turned back to this twenty-second psalm, and found the answer: He had left the key in the lock, where they (and we) might find it. But it is true that God had forsaken Him: the Mighty One; *His* Mighty One; and power there was not on His side. Plenty of power against Him, and the battle was not to be gained by might at all. Yet it was the crisis of the conflict which had been going on incessantly, ever since man fell away from God. Here was the battle of battles, the sum of all battles,—the strife between good and evil in its fiercest. And here, too, was once more the good apparently pros-

(ii.) the conflict.

My God, I cry in the day-time, and thou answerest not!
and in the [r]night, and cannot be silent.

(iii.) the manifestation.

But thou art [s]holy:
dwelling amid the [t]praises of Israel.

r *cf.* Jno. 13. 30 with Matt. 27. 45. *ctr.* Ps. 42. 8.
s Isa. 6. 3. Isa. 57. 15. Hab. 1. 13 *cf.* Heb. 7. 26 with 2 Cor. 5. 21.
t *cf.* Ps. 150; *cf.* 2 Chr. 20. 21.

trate, defeated, heaven uttering no sound, blood flowing again like Abel's (if so much better than Abel's), which had cried so long unavenged.

But here triumph is defeat: the rule of the battle, "they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Goodness is to conquer by submission and without encouragement;—conquer, not with extraneous aid, but by itself as goodness simply; trusting in a God who gives no sign.

Power can do nothing here for another reason, and a deeper one. Power can create a world or a universe; it cannot cancel sin, cannot act as if God were indifferent to sin, cannot take up the sinner and justify him, or bless him while unjustified. Power in God cannot act, nor love act, as if these were His sole attributes, or could act alone. If God act, He must act with all that He is; nay, if He justify, here it is for righteousness to pronounce: it is its place to do so; questions of righteousness can only be settled by righteousness, and it is written, "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to Jehovah." (Prov. xvii. 15.)

But thus the cry goes up, even from the lips of a Job,—a wail which has no answer: "How shall man be just with God?" (Job ix. 2.) Here One, standing in the place of men, cries with like result. In this awful place heaven is sealed to Him: there is no answer, nor escape from the full exaction of penalty. This is in effect Job's question, though taken up by Another, who, if there be escape, will surely find it. The conflict is real; the agony is intense: to find no way but that the cup must be drunk forces from Him the sweat as it were of great drops of blood, and an angel has to come from heaven to strengthen Him. But to strengthen Him for *what?* Only to go forward from the "day" in which still He could cry "Abba, Father!" into the awful "night" beyond. Even in the garden already, as to the drinking of the cup, He cried and was not heard; and the cross also, as we know, had its "daytime" as well as its "night," when the darkness fell upon it. And there no angel comes! No habitant of heaven comes into the "void" of that "raging deep," where out of darkness light is to be made to shine, but as yet is no ray of it.

There is no answer from God: who else, then, can give it? Listen! It is His own voice amid the still unrelieved darkness,—His voice giving answer to Himself, and proclaiming God in that desolation where He is not, and justifying Him in that awful abandonment which is the supreme agony of His soul.

"But Thou art holy!"

This, then, is the answer "why": it is not something apart from this; it is not what remains true, spite of there being none. *It is the answer itself;* the solution of the mystery; that which gives intelligence as to what is here, and alone gives any proper intelligence. It is *because* of the holiness of God that Christ is in that darkness of which the "darkness over all the land" is but the external sign. It is because "He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look at iniquity" (Hab. i. 13); and because upon Him who is here the true Sin-offering has been laid the iniquity of us all. Thus, and thus alone, it is that He "dwelleth amid the praises of Israel": these two things together more clearly reveal the deeper reality here than the blood on the mercy-seat on the day of atonement did for Israel how the tent of meeting could remain among them in the midst of their uncleanness (Lev. xvi. 16). Yet here is what corresponds, as is plain, with this.

How blessed to think of this lone Sufferer in the outside place contemplating the worship of glowing hearts with which God should encircle Himself forever! Here was Job's question answered for faith forever: man blessed, God glorified

b (4–8): the contrast. (i.) the fathers. (ii.) faith that was not confounded. (iii.) the portion of the Sufferer. (iv.) from man. (v.) the reproach of God's government.

Our [u]fathers trusted in thee:
they trusted, and thou didst [v]deliver them;
They cried unto thee and were delivered:
they trusted in thee and were not [w]confounded.
But I am a [x]worm, and not a man:
a [y]reproach of men, and despised of the people.
All they that see me [z]laugh me to scorn:
they shoot out the lip, they [a]wag the head.
"He trusted in Jehovah,—he will deliver him;
he will rescue him, for he delighted in him."

u cf. Gen. 22. 12. *cf.* Heb. 11. 32–37.
v Job 4. 7. Ps. 37. 25, 28.
w Ps. 34. 5.
x cf. Job 25. 6. *cf.* 2 Cor. 8. 9.
y cf. Ps. 69. 7,9,10,19,20. Isa. 53. 3.
z Matt. 27. 29, 39–44.
a Ps. 109. 25; Ps. 69. 12.

for evermore. How plain that only One could fulfill the meaning of this psalm; as only One could stand in the place which is indicated by it.

(*b*) But the nature of this place is further to be made plain, and put in contrast with any other, that any, of even the comparatively righteous among men, had ever occupied. "Our fathers trusted in Thee," the Voice goes on: "they trusted, and Thou didst deliver them." There was no similarity in this forsaking of God to the experience of any in times before this. "*They* cried unto Thee and were delivered; they trusted in Thee, and were not confounded." Yet it had been no strange thing for faith to have its martyrs. If being forsaken of God simply meant the being given up to death at the will of their enemies, there was an abundant record of such martyrs, those "of whom the world was not worthy." To reduce the cross of Christ to this is simply to take out of it that which constitutes true atonement. If this were being "made sin," then not a martyr that ever died but was made sin — or a sin-offering — also. For it is not here a question of the dignity of the Sufferer, but of the place in which He suffered, and this the psalm itself affirms to be perfectly and utterly exceptional. Just this being forsaken of God was for Him the unspeakable difference.

Exceptional it was not for man to suffer and die. Every form of death that one can imagine, perhaps, man has undergone. "But I," says this unique Sufferer, "am a worm, and not a man": gone down to a depth far below that of any man whatever. The word (*tolaath*) applies especially to the coccus from which the scarlet dye of the tabernacle was obtained, of course by its death: in that way, how significant of the One before us! But only as suffering under the judgment of sin could this be true of Him: indeed the word is used (Isa. i. 18) for the color of sin, and that of a heinous kind; and thus the application is still clearer: "He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor. v. 21.)

No act of man could make Him sin for man,—no suffering from men could make atonement with God: that was what was wrought by what passed between God and His burdened soul within that curtained chamber, never to be penetrated by any foot but His, and from which no cry emerges but that one pregnant one, the meaning of which is here revealed as far as may be for the satisfaction of our conscience and the adoring worship of our hearts. What man wrought could only naturally bring judgment upon man. What *He* wrought with God, and God through Him, brings out from the smitten Rock the river of divine, omnipotent grace.

The "reproach of men" pursued Him into this place which He had taken for men, "despised" even "of the people" (Israel) to whom specially He had been sent. Yea, He was the common mockery of all who saw Him. The gospels distinctly note this wagging of the head on the part of those passing by, and the very words of the psalm used by the chief priests with the scribes and elders in their derision of Him. Outwardly it would seem as if it were the government of God that furnished them with this reproach: in fact it was their hardness and unconsciousness of their own desert, as well as of the holiness and mercy of God, which blinded them to the meaning of the scriptures they were so manifestly fulfilling.

c (9–11): the innermost reality. (i.) God His sufficiency. (ii.) His dependence. (iii.) the longing of the heart after Him.

But thou art he that [b]took me out of my mother's womb,
making me confident upon my [c]mother's breasts.
I was cast upon thee from the womb:
from my mother's belly thou hast been my God.*
Be not far from me, for [d]trouble is near:
for there is [e]none to help.
Many [f]bulls have compassed me:
strong ones of Bashan have beset me round:
They opened wide their mouth upon me,
like a [g]lion tearing and roaring.

b Ps. 71. 6. *cf.* Lk. 1. 35.
c *cf.* Lk. 2. 40–49.
d *cf.* Ps. 102. 2.
e *cf.* Ps. 69. 20.
f Ps. 68. 30.
g Ps. 7. 2. Ps. 10. 9. *cf.* 1 Pet. 5. 8.

d (12–18): the trial from man. (i.) the strength arrayed. (ii.) for destruction.

* Eli, "my Mighty One."

(*c*) Three verses now show us the inmost heart of the Sufferer, and bring us back to the anguish above all others that He is experiencing. From His birth as Man, God has been His sufficiency and strength. Continuously He has been dependent upon Him. Now in the time of His sore distress, it is for Him that His soul craves. Perfect dependence upon the All-sufficient God: this is the perfection of manhood, and the absolute guarantee of an unstained and spotless life. What leads astray but our own wisdom? What is sin but the working of our own wills? If dependence upon Him were complete, for care, for guidance, for all good, what room would there be for evil or for error? Clearly it would be impossible. Faith, then, is the great work, of necessity; working by love which is implied in confidence such as this. And here was One in whom faith and love were in full possession everywhere, to whom God was all, and who, not having Him, had nothing. Yet in the hour of His distress He cried, and got no answer.

(*d*) We have now, in seven verses, the completeness of His suffering at the hands of man. As to it all, though we may go over it and give, as it were, the items, who can estimate the reality for Him who had not His like in capacity for sorrow, as for apprehension of all that can exist in the human heart? Yet this, after all, was not even part of the peculiar agony which really characterizes the psalm of atonement. Nothing here enters into the cry with which it begins: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

We are called first to realize the strength of the adversaries. They are bulls, with their horned front and reckless rush; strong beasts fed up on the fat pastures of Bashan,—men whom "fullness of bread" had filled with pride and insolence. That Caiaphas, the Sadducee, the unconscious prophet, inspired *consciously* only with the instinct of self-preservation, yet with eyes as dull to eternity as keen to present things, was a type of many more like this. How these would eye this Man of another sphere and another law, so unintelligible to such as they were! And if He were this to them, how terrible indeed would they be to Him, so fallen as they were and debased, that from being men they had become mere beasts of pasture!

But the figure changes, and we have instead of the bull the lion. The bull will crush what is in its way or toss out of it; but the lion *devours*. It is the picture of strength, but along with this of ferocity and rapaciousness,—"like a lion tearing and roaring." His enemies pursue him with a wrath that will be satisfied with nothing less than His destruction. There is a specific hatred toward Him, the opposition of those, not blind, but who "have both seen and hated both Himself and His Father."

And He who meets all this, in what condition is He to endure it? He is come from the agony of the garden; He is facing the worse agony of the Cross. Their "hour" is that of the "power of darkness," and of the forsaking of God. What strength can there be to oppose, when the Father's hand itself is giving Him the cup? His "heart is melted like wax" in the sacrificial fire of wrath against sin.

(iii.) the inner condition of the Sufferer.

Like water I am [h]poured out,
and my bones are all disjointed:
my heart is like wax,
it is melted in the midst of my bowels.

(iv.) weakness.

My [i]strength is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws;
and [j]thou hast laid me in the [k]dust of death.

(v.) exercise.

For [l]dogs have compassed me:
the assembly of evil-doers have inclosed me;
[m]piercing my hands and my feet.

(vi.)*

I may tell all my [n]bones:
they gaze, they stare upon me.

(vii.) complete rejection.

They [o]part my garments among them,
and upon my vesture they cast the lot.

h *cf.* 2 Sam. 14. 14.
cf. Dan. 5. 6.
i *cf.* Ps. 102. 23.
cf. 2 Cor. 13. 4.
j *cf.* Ps. 69. 26.
k *cf.* Lev. 17. 13.
l *cf.* Phil. 3. 2.
cf. Rev. 22. 15.
m *cf.* Jno. 19. 37.
cf. Jno. 20. 20.
n *ctr.* ver. 29.
o Matt. 27. 35. Jno. 19. 23.

* I do not find it easy to characterize this verse according to number, while yet I believe the divine sense of what is here is truly expressed by it. It unites closely with the next verse, while yet distinct. Compare the notes.

Thus His strength fails, His tongue cleaves to His jaws: He is as one already in the dust of death, but in fact alive to realize it, and that it is the hand of God. God, and *not* man, has placed Him where He is.

Then there is the exercise resulting from the floods of iniquity permitted to assail Him. How perfectly man was revealed in the presence of the Cross! "dogs," heartless, shameless, unclean and offal-feeding, hunting in packs like "the assembly of evil-doers" here: gathered by the spectacle of distress unequaled, for which they had no pity, and from which there was no escape: hands and feet pierced, nailed with insufferable agony to the tree of shame!

Exposed—every bone to be counted—to such eyes as these, that gaze and stare and blench not: not ashamed in the presence of their Judge and Maker. Parting among them the garments they have stripped from Him, and casting the lot—in Israel sacred to Jehovah (Prov. xvi. 33)—to decide the ownership of that seamless priestly robe which marks Him as what He is, "the Mediator between God and men," upon whom all the blessing of man depends. But this is, of course, to make the Gospels interpret the psalm, or at least give fullness to the interpretation. Does it not, however, answer well to that final number which stands opposite the verse,—this complete stripping of Christ, in the very insanity of passion and unbelief, of all that shows Him to be—and to be qualified to be—man's tender and compassionate Saviour?

The meaning of the priestly robes has been elsewhere looked at. (Exod. xxviii. *notes.*) But on the day of atonement it was not in the garments of glory and beauty, but in the simple white linen robe of unstained purity, that the high-priest entered the holiest of all. So Christ, in the power of His own perfection, (tested and brought out in the awful place to which He stooped for man) entered the heavens, never to be closed henceforth for us. Was it not, in fact, then, a sign of the most solemn character, men divesting Christ of His raiment, holding Him up thus stripped to the scorn of men? And what more suited to the deed than as it were taking the lot which belonged to God—the sign of His sovereignty even in what man calls "accident"—to dishonor and degrade with it Him for whom God had decreed the highest honor?

Thus the story of the human side of the Cross ends. Man has told himself fully out in it. What more, alas, could be said of him?

(*e*) Thus all has been gone through before God, and it is seen, indeed, how the high-priest enters the holiest in the white seamless robe of perfect righteousness. The time is come for hearing that hitherto unheard prayer; and He is "heard," as it is expressed in the epistle to the Hebrews, "for His piety." (Heb.

e (19-21): the end reached and the answer given. (i.) the appeal to Power. (ii.) salvation to be of God. (iii.) the realization.

2 (22-31): *Not* alone.

a (22-24): in the midst of the congr'n. (i.) Himself begins the praise.

But thou, Jehovah, be not far from me:
my Strength, [p] haste quickly to my help.
Rescue my soul from the [q] sword:
my only one from the paw of the dog.
Save me from the [r] lion's mouth:
yea, from the [s] horns of the aurochs thou hast answered me.

I will [t] declare thy name unto my [u] brethren:
in the midst of the [v] congregation will I praise thee:

p *cf.* Ps. 40. 13.
q *cf.* Zech. 13. 7 with Isa. 34. 6.
r ver. 13. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 17.
s Isa. 34. 7. *cf.* Acts 4. 27.
t Heb. 2. 12. *cf.* Jno. 17. 26.
u *cf.* Jno. 20. 17. *cf.* Rom. 8. 29.
v Ps. 1. 5.

v. 7.) He has gone into the place of utmost probation under the burden and penalty of sin not his own, resigning Himself into the hands of God to suffer according to His will what none beside Himself could suffer. We are permitted to hear now His final appeal to God, and to rejoice in His announcement of the answer, which was made upon the Cross and recorded for us in the gospel of John, where (as in Matthew and Mark the cry of abandonment shows the Lord's entrance into the darkness), the words "It is finished" show His emergence from it. Righteousness now claims His deliverance from the place, where God has been glorified by unfailing obedience on the part of Him who went into it for others, and for the glory of God Himself. "God has been glorified in Him; and if God be glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will straightway glorify Him." (John xiii. 32.)

After the words that speak of the exhaustion of the special "cup," He has indeed to die: for death is part of that which is upon man, which it is given Him by submission to it to lift off. This also is necessary, therefore, for atonement to be complete. But, for His *soul*, what is death, when He can once more cry, "Father," and commit His spirit in peace to Him? — when He can Himself now take power into His hands again, even in dismissing it?*

Once more, then, in this psalm, the appeal is made: "But Thou, Jehovah, be not far from Me!" After all that man has done or can do, and without making light of this, (though it be for man himself that this is so unutterably grave), still Where is God? is the question of questions. To this, therefore, He returns, pleading that God, His strength, shall appear in His behalf. Power He refused for Himself to save Him from this place; "by might can none prevail" when in it. But the victory reached, power at last comes to be necessarily and fully on the Victor's side. "Rescue my soul from the sword; my only one from the power of the dog." This is the deliverance in full, for it involves all else, though it be the outward enemies that are contemplated. "My soul," as we see by its use elsewhere (Num. xxiii. 10), is the equivalent in Hebrew of "my*self*," and "my only one" answers to it in the parallel, though some would give it as "my solitary one," and see in it another reference to what is indeed the controlling thought in all this first part of the psalm. Outcast, however, is the Speaker to be no longer: He has been tried to the utmost; He has committed Himself and all that with which He is identified into the hands of God; the decision is to be from Him; all power is with Him: now from the very horns of the aurochs He is answered.

2. The first part of the psalm is ended: the work is completed, and accepted by God as complete. Blessed be God, He who was alone in the sorrow is not alone in the joy that springs from it: He will never be alone again. The corn of wheat for this has fallen into the ground and died. We are now to see the fruit of it: God's grace is to flow out in widening circles, and the knowledge of the

* The expression in Matthew is really "He *dismissed* (ἀφῆκε) His spirit" (ch. xxvii. 50). See for the comparative place in atonement of death and wrath-bearing, and the way the New Testament speaks of these, the notes on the sin-offering, Lev. iv. (vol. i., p. 289–291).

(ii.) the testimony to Israel.

(iii.) the matter for praise revealed, (which is in fact the resurrection of Christ.)

Ye who [w]fear Jehovah, praise him:
all ye seed of Jacob, glorify him:
and reverence him, all ye seed of Israel.
For He hath [z]not slighted nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted one:
nor hath he [y]hid his face from him;
but when he [z]cried unto him, he heard.

[w] Ps. 34. 2. *cf.* Ps. 40. 3.
[x] *cf.* Rom. 1. 4.
[y] *ctr.* vers. 1, 2.
[z] *cf.* Heb. 5. 7. ver. 21.

Lord to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. In what follows there seem to be three parts: in the first, the Lord is in the midst of the congregation, which at first that of a remnant, widens into the nation of Israel, revived and converted to God; in the second, the "*great* congregation" gathers in from the whole world. In both there utters itself the voice that cried once in forsaken sorrow and was not heard; while the joy that fills all hearts, and the praise that goes up to God on every side spring out of the blessed fact that at last He *was* heard. The work of the Spirit to maintain the truth, and a generation for the Lord as the fruit of it, is given in the third part.

(*a*) In the time of His bitterest distress we have learned how the Lord's heart still could turn to the thought of Jehovah dwelling amid the praises of His people, and we remember that the day of atonement, which is so linked with this precious psalm, emphasizes the same thing. It is no wonder, therefore, that now, immediately His prayer is heard, He is found declaring Jehovah's Name among His *brethren*, and praising in the midst of the congregation. The apostle John it is who gives us the beginning of this in the message entrusted to Mary Magdalene and His after appearance among the gathered disciples. Suited it is that a woman should be the first to have made to her the glorious announcement of His resurrection and its results: "Go and tell *my brethren* that I ascend unto my Father and unto your Father, and to my God and your God."

Here is relationship established and the Divine Name declared; declared *in* relationship, the name of Father, with just that necessary distinction preserved between Himself and His people,—"*my* Father and *your* Father," not "*our* Father," which reminds us of His infinite glory who has been pleased to take us into such kinship with Himself, while it intimates also that it is through Him that this place is given to us. Here is the value of His work told out, and in terms which embrace all the people of God, although saints of the present period are the "first-born ones" (Heb. xii. 23) in this relationship. Blessed it is to know that the greatest blessings are also the widest: just like fresh air and sunlight which, from God's side at least, are free to all. And so the apostle argues that "both He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." (Heb. ii. 11.) How sweet and wonderful to be of the number of those of whom, because of their origin, *He* is "not ashamed"!

The "assembly" here, as being an assembly of this character, has had no fulfillment, except in Christian times. In Judaism there was no gathering of such a nature: the children of God were scattered abroad by the necessity of a legal system which could give no nearness to God in that it could purge no conscience, give no abiding-place to the worshiper before God. Under the new covenant, however, Israel will be an assembly of this character, an assembly of righteous ones in which the ungodly shall no more stand; and to Israel now the psalm goes on. Those who have but "feared" Jehovah hitherto are now to praise Him, *all* Jacob's seed to glorify Him, all Israel's seed to reverence Him. For the way of the Lord is being prepared after Isaiah's manner,—the mountains leveled, the valleys filled. The lowly are to find wondrous exaltation; and the very grace of God is to make Him feared. Blessed, indeed, is the self-abasement produced by the knowledge of the marvelous salvation of the Cross. And so it must be: he who treats this grace lightly can but lightly know it.

For this is, indeed, the subject-matter of this song of praise. It is the song of those who have learned the mystery of this strangely afflicted One, and have found

b (25-29): progress—the great congregation.

(i.) His vows.

(ii.) the humble ministered to.

(iii.) remembrance and return.

(iv.) the creature in the creature place.

Of thee shall be my praise in the [a]great congregation:
I will make good my [b]vows before them that fear him.
The [c]humble shall eat and be full.
they shall [d]praise Jehovah that fear him:
your heart shall live for aye.
All the [e]ends of the earth shall remember and turn to Jehovah:
and all the families of the nations shall worship before thee.
For the [f]kingdom shall be Jehovah's,
and he shall be ruler among the nations.

a Ps. 35. 18.
b *cf.* Ps. 116. 14.
c *cf.* Ps. 69. 32.
d Ps. 33. 1.
e *cf.* Ps. 45. 12. *cf.* Isa. 49. 6. *cf.* Isa. 60. 3.
f Ps. 24. 10.

in His afflictions the judgment of sin before a holy God; yet have found, too, in the answer of God to Him the way discovered by which the righteousness of God is declared, and His love at the same time made known. Christ risen was, in fact, this answer; and the gospel now to go forth to the ends of the earth. Christ risen and exalted is now the Revealer of God in His full glory,—all the "glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

(*b*) Israel brought thus to God, her fruit has the seed in itself for the nations of the earth. The grace shown to her is "life from the dead" to these. Thus the glorious Voice is heard in a wider sphere. The "great congregation" of millennial nations becomes the sphere in which Christ fulfills His "vows" of glorifying Jehovah. Yet we cannot but notice that there are lacking apparently the fullness and intimacy of that first declaration of Jehovah's Name which takes place within the smaller circle. Nor is it difficult to account for this. *Israel* will be entirely a congregation of the righteous, as we have so often been assured; but we have been equally assured that such will *not* be the condition of the nations beyond. With many here there will be still but a forced semblance of worship,—obedience rendered because it dare not be withheld; sin will be restrained, and yet not banished; and the final outbreak, when Satan is let loose, will be a terrible one.

Hence not yet can there be an unchecked flow of blessing, such as eternity has in store for all the redeemed. And the words here seem to indicate a certain lack of response, as a whole, which acts necessarily as a restraint upon the communications of His love: "I will make good my vows *before* them that fear Him."

Yet there is abundant blessing for those who *do* respond, while its limitation to a certain character—always, of course, true—is yet here insisted on with an emphasis which is obvious. "The *humble* shall eat and be full; they shall praise Jehovah that fear Him." The reference is, doubtless, as Delitzsch observes, to the peace-offering which accompanied vows; and here Messiah's vows furnish forth, indeed, a royal banquet upon which, in communion, the humble feed to fullest satisfaction. "Your heart shall live for aye," becomes thus the assurance of the Entertainer to the guests,—an assurance full of blessing.

And this is the voice of recall to man, so long a wanderer: "all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to Jehovah: and all the families of the nations shall worship before Thee." And so shall come the universal kingdom, the creature in the creature-place with God,—just to keep which is perfect blessing.

For this the pride and self-satisfaction of man may well come down: "the fat upon the earth have eaten and worship." What are they, apart from Him, but "those going down to the dust"? and on account of which *He* went Himself to the grave: He "who did not preserve alive His own soul."* This joy and worship of men under condemnation, and who owe their all to His blessed work, is indeed a recompense of love like His,—"the fruit of the travail of His soul."

*An interpretation which Pridham says "is due, I believe, originally to Mr. Boys."

(v.) Messiah's recompense.

c (30, 31) the setting apart a seed to proclaim this.

(i.) the seed of the Lord.

(ii.) the testimony.

All the [g]fat upon earth have eaten and worship:
all those going down to the dust shall kneel before him,
—even [him who] [h]did not preserve alive his soul.
A [i]seed shall serve him:
it shall be reckoned to the Lord for a generation.
They shall come and shall declare [j]his righteousness,
to the people to be [k]born,—because he hath [l]done [this].

[g] *cf.* Ps. 72. 11.
[h] *cf.* Jno. 10. 18.
[i] *cf.* Isa. 6. 13. *cf.* Zech. 13. 7–9.
[j] *cf.* Rom. 3. 21, 22.
[k] Ps. 102. 18.
[l] Ps. 118. 23.

(*c*) The closing part here shows the provision God has made for the perpetual preservation of this upon the earth. Alas, be the work all that it really is, and its fruit ever so necessary and glorious for men, yet except there be a corresponding work of the Spirit, and in sovereign power, there will be no effect. But God has purposed to glorify His Son, and that He should be the Firstborn among many brethren. The announcement of this suitably ends the psalm of atonement. "A seed *shall* serve Him: it shall be counted to the Lord for a generation." Literally, "*the* generation": that, I suppose, which is indeed such: a people begotten of God, although the full expression of that thought waits for the New Testament. But they are *reckoned* as His: He owns them such; and with them it lies to maintain the testimony of the grace they have experienced: "they shall come and shall declare His righteousness to a people that shall be born, because He has done this."

This again comes very near the language of the New Testament. The apostle Paul it is that has taught us that a central truth of the gospel is "the righteousness of God." It is this which the sinner dreads, which the gospel reveals to be for him through the work of the Cross. The righteousness of God as against sin that Cross proclaims (Rom. iii. 25, 26); and equally as against a world that knows not the Father, by His being taken out of it, to be seen by them no more. (John xvi. 10.) But this involves the answer of the psalm before us, and the acceptance of that work to fulfill which He hung upon the tree. And thus Divine righteousness it is that has a gospel for us. (Rom. i. 16, 17.) Justification can be by righteousness alone, and the justification of the ungodly only by penalty in fact endured. (Rom. iii. 21–24.) Then, Christ dying for the ungodly, the acceptance of the sinner on the ground of this is really righteousness: "He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor. v. 21.)

Thus the psalm of atonement, though it comes too early for God to speak fully out, touches in its closing strain the very keynote of the gospel.

Psalm XXIII.

The apostle prays for the Hebrew Christians to whom he writes, that "the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, may make" them "perfect in every good work to do His will." (Heb. xiii. 20, 21.) Coming after the story of atonement,—the blood of the everlasting covenant,—we have no difficulty in recognizing Christ, brought again from the dead, as the Divine Shepherd of His people now.

Like the latter part of the previous psalm, the present speaks of salvation as the fruit of the Cross. There it was its *ex*tensive value, reaching out to the ends of the earth, and from generation to generation upon the earth. Here its value is *in*tensive, affecting the individual life,—comforting, renewing, fortifying the believing soul,—leading it on from present communion with its Saviour-Lord, even amid opposition and hostility, to dwell in Jehovah's house where no power of the enemy can penetrate, no distracting voice can mar the sabbatic rest.

Yet even in this spiritual idyll, of which Christian sentiment has so completely possessed itself, there is sufficient witness that its *primary* application is

Ps. xxiii.

1 (1-3): Unchanging care. (i.) sufficiency. (ii.) sustenance.

[2]PSALM XXIII.

Salvation in progress.

A psalm of David.

JEHOVAH is my [m]shepherd:
I shall not [n]want.
He maketh me [o]lie down in [p]green pastures:
he [q]leadeth me beside [r]quiet waters.

m Is. 40. 11. Jno. 10. 11. Heb. 13. 20.
n Phil. 4. 19. Ps. 34. 9.
o Matt. 11. 28.
p Ezek. 34. 14.
q cf. Rev. 7. 17.
r cf. Isa. 8.6.

not Christian; and this is seen, of course, most plainly just where the end is contemplated, even though that end be Jehovah's house. For this—interpreted for us as it is in the psalm following, is not a heavenly but an earthly portion, and quite distinct from that "*Father's* house" which the Lord has left to be the hope of His people now, even though, and most clearly because, the one is the type of the other.

It is plain that even in the gospel of John itself (ch. ii. 16) the *temple* is spoken of by the Lord as His "Father's house." That house, though for the time destroyed, is to exist again and to continue on through those millennial times, beyond which the book of the Psalms never carries us. The same prophetic scriptures which anticipated that desolation, now so long realized, look on to the glorious restoration of what is always regarded as the same house. (Mic. iii. 12; iv. 2.) But these were but "patterns of things in the heavens," and "figures of the true" (Heb. ix. 23, 24), and it is in this way the Lord uses them in those memorable words which have shone ever since for the hearts of pilgrims, bright with the glory of that other sphere.

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you." (John xiv. 2.)

In the earthly house there were chambers of small size for the priests and Levites (1 Chron. xxviii. 11-13) as they came up to serve in their courses; and to these, but by way of contrast, the word translated "mansions" refers. It is a noun derived from the verb "to abide,"* much used in the gospel, which emphasizes the eternal and divine; itself only once used besides, where it is said, "We will come unto him, and make Our *abode* with him" (xiv. 23). The chambers of the temple were only for temporary use; the mansions are abodes for eternity. The first are earthly; the latter heavenly. These are "where," He says, "I AM": His eternal dwelling-place; and therefore He comes to receive us there.

The prior application of this psalm to an Israelitish remnant does not, of course, in the least deprive us of our own right in it, to whom belong the antitypes of Israel's earthly inheritance, and who rightly read in it for ourselves the fuller and higher blessings. This method of interpretation of the psalms, as of the Old Testament at large, only enhances their preciousness; while it neither takes from God's ancient people what is theirs, nor confounds the dispensations by attributing to one the characteristics of the other.

1. As with the first psalm, the six verses divide into two sections of three verses each; the first of which dwells upon the unchanging care of the Unchanging God, Jehovah, the Shepherd of His people, to us made known in the tender intimacy of manhood. To know Him aright in this relationship He has taken toward us is to be at rest: "Jehovah is my Shepherd: I shall not want." To prophesy here is easy and safe. Here can be no lack of power, of wisdom, or of love. Anxiety is only unbelief: faith is happiness, in exact proportion to its simplicity. It is no question of what we are, of our ability to meet anything that may arise: confidence in ourselves is only that which robs Him of His glory, who is Saviour to the uttermost, and has pledged to us that word by which

* μονή, from μένω, unhappily disguised by various renderings in our common version: "abide, dwell, continue, remain, endure."

(iii.) restoration for His name.

He [s]restoreth my soul:
he leadeth me in paths of [t]righteousness for his name's sake.

[s] *cf.* Jno. 21. 15-19.
[t] Ps. 5. 8.

heaven and earth are sustained in being. The terms of the new covenant admit no intrusion of creature assurance among the glorious "I wills" of a covenant God.

But there is the experience which surely follows to him who walks with God. "I am the Door: by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." Here is the soul's answer to that: "He maketh me lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside quiet waters." The words picture peaceful enjoyment of that which the Spirit of God ministers in unfailing freshness to the soul. The sheep, like other ruminants,—the clean animals of the law,—does not simply swallow its food and make an end of it. Lying down at rest, the gathered food is brought up again and deliberately and perfectly triturated and reduced. How much this process counts for with God, the Mosaic law bears emphatic testimony. The spiritual reality it is, of course, that counts. The lying down is not mere rest, but has to do with the assimilation of that which these "green pastures" indicate, and to which the "quiet waters" add how greatly! Restful employment with the soul-satisfying treasures of God's word, divinely provided, divinely ministered,—how little does it characterize even the people of God in the present day! And how little "clean" are their ways and thoughts, by reason of this!

But then, too, "He restoreth my soul,"—*not* simply He refreshes or renews it, but brings it back from wandering, as the parallelism seems to assure us: for "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake." These last words give us the principle of these tender and holy ways,—a principle which guarantees their consistency absolutely. He does this "*for His Name's sake.*" His Name is that by which we know Him; it is the manifestation of what He is. God desires to be known by us: known, that we may trust Him; known, that we may delight ourselves in Him. This knowledge of God is that which is all power and blessing for our lives here,—that which awakes and sustains the worship of eternity. If He who is light and love is acting thus in us to make us the vessels of this display of Himself, how gladly should we yield ourselves up to Him for it! How perfectly confident may we be as to the result!

The "restoration" of the soul, as connected with His leading us in righteous paths, would naturally be, therefore, correction by His grace of that continual tendency to wander, which the more we "hunger and thirst after righteousness" the more we shall discover and confess to be in us. How greatly we are His debtors for this "keeping" grace of His, eternity alone will tell. Our resource is that tender ministry of His which He invites us to receive, not simply when we are conscious of straying, but when we may be still unconscious. The dust of evil settles easily, and without giving alarm, in a world in which Satan is "the prince of the power of the air"; and the mirror of conscience becomes quickly dimmed. Thus our constant need of recourse to Him who, girded and ready, desires to use the water and the towel on our behalf, and whose word is, "Except *I* wash thee, thou hast no part with Me." Was it because *they* knew the need? or because *He* knew it? And the words with which we come to Him are not, "Lord, I have searched and tried myself, and I *have seen*," but rather, "Search *me*, O Lord, and try me; and *see* if there *be* any wicked way in me; and lead me in the way everlasting." (Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.)

Does any one imagine this is legality, to affirm the constant need we have of Him? No; this continual recourse to Him is perfect happiness. To be kept in His presence, to be made to realize this perfect and holy love, is a precious necessity. If we feel it humbling, all the more do we need it. The life which we have in Him is in all its practical manifestations a life of dependence; and in dependence is it nurtured and sustained. "And when He has found it, He layeth it upon His shoulders, rejoicing." This is a text upon the care of the

2 (4-6): in view of enemies.

(i.) peace.

Even [u]though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death, I will fear no evil:
for thou art [v]with me:
thy [w]rod and thy [x]staff, they [y]comfort me.

[u] *cf.* Acts 17. 24, 25.
[v] Isa. 43. 2.
[w] *cf.* Ex. 4. 17, 20.
[x] *ctr.* 2 Ki. 18. 21.
[y] *cf.* 2 Cor. i. 3, 4.

good Shepherd indited from the lips of the Shepherd Himself. Shall *we* do less than rejoice, that we are to be kept thus by His grace and power,—always the burden upon His heart and arm?

2. We have in the second part of the psalm the difficulties of the way before us, though fully met, and in the end leaving not a mote in the summer sunshine of the soul. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of death-shade, I will fear no evil." The valley of death-shade is the world as darkened with that which is the sentence upon man universally, and of which the law of necessity rather deepened the shadow than removed it. We have heard already (Ps. vi. 5) the apprehension of saints in Israel in view of death; very different indeed from the assurance expressed here: and by this we may better appreciate the change which the knowledge of atonement has brought in. There is absolute contrast between the former "in death there is no remembrance of thee," and the thankful acknowledgment now, "Thou art ever with me." Yes, there is remembrance, and more than remembrance: there is the presence, and not the mere memory, of the Beloved of the heart. This shall never be lacking. The sun that permits not darkness shall never go down. The Good Shepherd will not leave to itself the sheep that He has recovered, and whose recovery has caused Him such delight of love.

It is not, however, to be understood as if death alone were in question here. This may well stand rather as the concrete expression for all that which stamps the world as fallen away from God. Death is that which speaks God's necessary dissatisfaction with it, while yet He lingers over it in patient love. And the Cross is the fullest confirmation of both these things: at once His judgment of it and His salvation for it. The sin and its attendant misery have indeed brought out this love in completest utterance, so as to make the song of the redeemed in response the highest and the fullest praise of all.

The humanity of Christ is the assurance of the truth from man's lips here, "Thou art ever with me"; and in what follows—"Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me"—while the original figure of the shepherd suggests the language, it would seem as if the full truth had burst through this envelope, and we were made to feel the human tenderness which sought its objects among the sons of men. The rod, it is true, is still the symbol of authority; but the "staff" is, according to the derivation, "what one leans upon," and can hardly apply to the Shepherd in this way, though it be still *His* staff. It is His word which is thus the stay of the soul; that which, going with us into the furnace of trial, is proved by the same furnace as we ourselves are. Every believer's experience is full of assurance as to this.

But the "rod" is no less a comfort: to be "under authority," and taking the road marked out by Him: knowing that the "sea" will part its waters at His bidding, and Amalek will be defeated as He stretches it forth; knowing also that the discipline of it is the tenderness of His love, and that the lion and the bear have fallen under it already. Who would be without that rod which is the necessary accompaniment of His presence, who is Master in every place in which He is found, and over every circumstance of the varying path?

The figure changes once again, and the Shepherd-Lord becomes the Host. How many figures must be used to "set the Saviour forth"! "Thou spreadest a table for me in the presence of mine enemies." There is quiet satisfaction and communion which the foes may look upon, dumb and without ability to disturb it. "Thou anointest my head with oil"—as was done for the banquet; "my cup runneth over:" no element is lacking to make the joy complete: it is the anticipation of the eternal blessedness when there shall be enemies no longer.

(ii.) overflowing abundance.

(iii.) the soul's dwelling-place.

Thou spreadest me a [z]table in the [a]presence of mine enemies:
thou [b]anointest my head with oil; my cup [c]runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall [d]follow me all the days of my life:
and I will [e]dwell in Jehovah's house to [f]length of days.

[z] *ctr.* Ps. 78. 19. [a] *cf.* Phil. 1. 12-18. [b] Ps. 92. 10. *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 20. [c] *cf.* Ps. 16. 5. *cf.* Eph. 3. 17-20. [d] *cf.* Heb. 13. 6. [e] Ps. 27. 4; *cf.* Jno. 14. 2. [f] *cf.* Rev. 3. 12.

Already they are as if they were not. In the East, when any one has assumed in this way the place of the host, he has by this fact assumed at the same time the protection of his guest; and this is what is implied in the words here. How precious and ample the assurance thus given by communion with the King of kings! Anointed with the Spirit of God, sharing the fullness of the divine store with Him whose love has opened all its blessing to me, surely my cup will overflow, and lips and life bear testimony to the grace that has done this for me! It is the pledge as well as the anticipation of the joy to come; and so we are taught to argue:—

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in Jehovah's house to length of days."

This introduces the subject of the following psalm, and closes the present with the foretaste of the fullest bliss conceivable by the soul. For us the blessing is, as already said, to be enjoyed in a higher sphere than could be known by the Israelite. "The Father's house"! what does it mean for us? All that we know of joy already must go into the conception; then to be expanded on every side,—all limits and all that would seem contradictory taken away; leaving then the consciousness that but a shadow of the substance has been reached, a knowledge which, face to face with the reality, will be accounted none. Yea, "he that thinketh that he knoweth anything, knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."

Psalm XXIV.

The last psalm of the series is self-evidently now before us: we cannot go beyond the dwelling in Jehovah's house; and this is worthily the third psalm of the third section of the nine which open the third division of this Psalm-Genesis. It is the fruit of atonement. It is the expression of that love which has sought man, which in the depth of his need atonement expresses. Christ down here, a man amongst men, has made the grace of it as simple as it is yet ineffable. In the new earth, and so eternally, the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and He will dwell with them. (Rev. xxi. 3.) The present psalm does not reach as far as this: no psalm does; it is millennial, but in principle the same. God has chosen Zion to be the place of His rest forever (Psalm cxxxii. 13, 14); and though its present desolation may seem a long argument against this, He will yet fulfill His purpose. "I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation; and Jehovah shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even forever."* (Mic. iv. 7.) Thus the end of the seventy weeks of Daniel, which is to bring in the blessing for his people and his holy city, anoints the Most Holy Place. (Dan. ix. 24.) But the city itself, like the camp in the desert of old, will be canopied by the cloud of glory, the sign of Jehovah's presence: for "Jehovah will create upon every dwelling-place on Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flame of fire by night." (Isa. iv. 5.) This, by the very terms of it, is not the eternal state; but it is the prelude of it.

The subject of the psalm is plainly the character of those that draw near to God, a people, as the sixth verse would show, not wholly Israelitish; and this is simple, if in the first we understand—what is certainly the fact—that the whole

* *Le-olam va-ed:* the strongest expression for eternity in the Old Testament.

Ps. xxiv.

1 (1-5): Creator-Father.
(i.) the whole earth His.
(ii.) who hath established it in separation from the waters.
(iii.) who shall dwell with Him?

[3]PSALM XXIV.

The dwellers in Jehovah's house, and Jehovah entering it.

A psalm of David.

THE [g]earth is Jehovah's, and the fullness of it:
the habitable world, and they that [h]dwell therein.
For he hath [i]founded it upon the seas,
and established it upon the floods.
[j]Who shall ascend to Jehovah's hill?
and who shall stand in his holy place?

g Ex. 19. 5. 1 Cor. 10. 26.
h *cf.* Isa. 40. 15-17.
i Gen. 1. 9. Job 38. 6, 8-11.
j Ps. 15. 1. Isa. 33. 14, 15.

earth is now become His, His name owned everywhere in it. In the last part Jehovah of hosts enters the sanctuary as manifested "King of glory." The bringing in of the ark to Zion in David's time would naturally seem to be the occasion of the psalm,—*as* naturally made a prophecy of the fuller and abiding blessing in the time yet to come.

1. The history of Israel and of the earth are inseparably bound up together. The national promises are to be fulfilled to them on earth, and their blessing involves that of the earth at large. As the Christian Church is the "church of the first-born ones written—enregistered—in heaven" (Heb. xii. 23), Israel is God's first-born (Ex. iv. 22) upon earth; and in both cases this term "*first*-born" implies a wider relationship. God as seen in Israel is the "God of the whole earth," though, because of sin, redemption here also must make it good, and to know it fully, the earth itself must pass by regeneration (Matt. xix. 28) and, as it were, bodily reconstruction (2 Pet. iii. 10–13) into the eternal glory of the "new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness."

In this breadth, and under these conditions, God appears in Israel as the Creator-Father; and in the first verse claims as Jehovah the whole world as His. The time is come of that "regeneration" of which the Lord has spoken; and now "the earth is Jehovah's, and the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein." And He has the best of titles to it: "for He hath founded it upon the seas, and established it over the floods."

We see, of course, that it is of that dry land which upon the third day God separated from the waters, and called "earth," that the psalmist is speaking; and not of the earth as a globe. Plainly this foundation is a separation, and the water has ever since been working at this earth of God's establishment, seeking, as it were, to overthrow it; but has not been able. Apt type it is, this struggle, of the fortunes of His people, against whom the strife of centuries has been waged, to overthrow the barrier of God's purpose with which He has hedged them round, and could not. Now is in fact in Israel the time of that later psalm (the ninety-third) in which they sing of the rebuke of such waters which have risen up against the throne of God:—

"Thy throne is established of old:
Thou art from everlasting.
The floods have lifted up, Jehovah,
the floods have lifted up their voice:
the floods lift up their waves.
Jehovah on high is mightier than the noise of many waters:
yea, than the mighty waves of the sea."

Not without such significance is it here that Jehovah has founded the earth upon the seas, and established it over the floods. The reckless will of man has met its rebuke from God, and what is to be fruitful for Him is rescued from the destroyer. What more natural than this as the introduction to the question which follows? Rampant evil has been put down: "who" now "shall ascend into Jehovah's hill? and who shall stand in His holy place?" The answer is evident: it is he who has clean hands and a pure heart,—the practical life no Pharisaism, but the real index of the man himself,—"who has not *lifted up* his

(iv.) their practical character.

He that is [k]clean of hands and pure of heart;
who hath not lifted up his soul to [l]falsehood,
nor sworn [m]deceitfully.

(v.) the recompense.

He shall receive the blessing from Jehovah,
and [n]righteousness from the God of his salvation.

2 (6): The remnant.

This is the generation of them that seek him,
that [o]seek thy face, O [p]Jacob.

k 2 Sam. 22. 21. Matt. 5. 8.
l Ps. 4. 2.
m Ps. 15. 4.
n *cf.* Ps. 22. 31.
o Ps. 27. 8. Isa. 2. 2, 5.
p Isa. 41. 14.

soul to vanity," (for it is pride that most of all connects and ends with this: as one has said, "the moment we step out of our nothingness, we step into it,") "nor sworn deceitfully."

The recompense follows: "He shall receive the blessing from Jehovah, and righteousness from the God of his salvation." The preceding psalms have given us the ability to interpret this aright. Righteousness absolutely, as we know, in himself can no man find, nor therefore can God award it. Righteousness in a mere comparative way will not do for the presence of God. For this there must come in two things: one of these has been already before us; the other is not revealed clearly in the Old Testament at all. One is the work *for* men—atonement; the other is the work *in* men, the communication of a divine nature, perfect in itself as such, though with many hindrances in this life to its perfect manifestation. In both these ways the righteousness is indeed a gift received from the God of our salvation. From first to last all is of grace, and thus of God, more perfectly than the Old Testament could express it; and we cannot be wrong in reading into it from the fuller revelation what is necessary for its perfect explanation. So read, we can understand how God is true to the requirement of His own character, while yet it is grace all through that alone can be man's sufficiency.

This is the true end of this section of the psalm, although the verse that follows seems, and really is, so closely connected with it. But it is not, in its significance, a real sixth, as the remainder of the psalm is not, what in that case it would have to stand for, a second section. The sixth verse is in fact itself the second section; and has in that position much more to tell us than merely, what is so clearly evident, that those now described are those who are given to stand before Jehovah.

2. The parallelism of this verse does not seem at first sight a true one; and as a consequence, the margin of our common version has seemed to some at least practically right. "This is the generation of them that seek Him (Jehovah): of them that seek Thy face, O [God of] Jacob." But so important a change would have to be supported by more authority than the two MSS. adduced for it, even though aided by the Septuagint and Peshito versions. It is too easy, too likely to be read in by one freely translating.

On the other hand, "Jacob" can hardly be taken as the name of those who seek their God. Its place in the sentence is awkward to convey this meaning, as the name itself seems unsuited to the connection. Taken in the simplest way of reading it, the verse is also most intelligible,—indeed, perfectly clear. God dwells in Jacob—will do so in those coming days to which the psalm refers: those who seek His dwelling-place necessarily therefore seek the people among whom He dwells. And they are Jacob,—such as owe this distinguishing privilege, not to goodness in themselves, but to grace in Him; grace which invites the approach of those to whom in like manner grace can be the only plea.

The consequence follows that not the tribes of Israel alone but Gentiles also are contemplated here; probably Israel in the first clause, "them that seek Him," and Gentiles in the second, those who seek Jacob's face. And this distinction gains support from the *different* words used for "seek" in these two clauses. The first, *darash*, means, primarily, to "tread a place, *i. e.*, to go or come to it, to frequent," thus implying common, habitual recourse, as of those near to and acquainted with God. While the second, *baqash*, means rather "to

3 (7–10): The manifestation.
a (7, 8): Jehovah, the Mighty God. (i.) the summons of the King. (ii.) mighty in war.
b (9, 10) Jehovah of hosts. (i.) the summons of the King. (ii.) the question answered.

[q]Lift up your heads, ye gates:
and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors;
and the [r]King of glory shall come in.
Who is this King of glory?
Jehovah, [s]strong and mighty; Jehovah, mighty in [t]war.
Lift up your heads, ye gates:
and lift them up, ye everlasting doors,
and the King of glory shall come in.
Who is this King of glory?
[u]Jehovah of hosts: he is the King of glory.

q Isa. 26. 2. *cf.* Heb. 9. 24.
r cf. Ps. 2. 6.
s Ps. 50. 1.
t Ex. 15. 3. Ps. 68. 1.
u Ps 46. 7, 11.

seek that which is uncertain and doubtful, with desire of obtaining, and with care and attention." Thus the words exactly suit the respective cases; and all this is again in accordance with the opening of the psalm, in which Jehovah claims, as we have seen, the whole earth as His. Thus the words of the Lord by Isaiah are fulfilled: "Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to Jehovah, to serve Him, and to love the name of Jehovah, to be His servants . . . even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt-offerings and sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." (Isa. lvi. 6, 7.)

This second section shows us, therefore, the extension of the class of accepted worshipers beyond the nation of Israel, and that, as was said of Cornelius, "in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him." (Acts x. 35.)

3. We are now made to see Jehovah Himself enter His temple, to rest at last, after the long strife is over, the glorious King, so long refused or ignored, now clothed with irresistible might. The gates are challenged that had been shut against Him, and bidden to lift up their heads to admit a more exalted Visitant than ever they had known before. The answering question comes, however, as if they who gave it were still unconscious of His majesty, "Who is this King of glory?" To which again it is replied, "Jehovah strong and mighty; Jehovah mighty in war." No doubt, as Delitzsch puts it, the reference here may have been to the conquest of Zion by David in the power of God. But this, as we have seen elsewhere, has also its typical significance (see 2 Sam. v. 6, *notes*); and the psalm looks onward to the fulfillment of the type. The true David has come forth, the Christ in divine glory, and yet as the apocalyptic Rider on the white horse (Rev. xix. 11), the Warrior-King. He has shown Himself for the deliverance of His people and of the earth, "Jehovah mighty in war." The hostile powers of the nations have been smitten down, and the victory is achieved which has made peace—a long peace—possible. He has scattered the people that delight in war. The Jebusites, the "treaders down," are they that have been trodden down, and Zion is now to be His "fixed" abode.

So the reiterated appeal is made: "Lift up your heads, ye gates; and lift them up, ye everlasting doors! and the King of glory shall come in." But from the gates yet again the question comes: "Who is He, this King of glory?" As when of old, in the presence of the risen Lord, the disciples "believed not for joy, and wondered," so here the wondrous truth is too great for sudden admittance; it is not easy for the gates to lift themselves so high. But it must be: His grace will take no denial; with the magnificence of His universal title He will put down all resistance to His will. Listen, long desolate Zion! Listen, O earth, planet that hast been indeed a "wanderer" among the stars, lost prodigal, darkened with the dust of thy servitude, and stranger to the heart of God: there is to be merriment and gladness over thee, restored prodigal, brought back into the brotherhood of stars that shine forever. Listen: "Jehovah of hosts! HE is the King of glory."

Sec. 2.

There follows in the second section once more a series of remnant psalms, in which their experiences and exercises are told out as before, but into which now the apprehension of divine grace enters in a manner before unknown. This shows again in how orderly a manner the psalms are grouped; and the number of them here bears striking witness to it. For as we have had in each of the two preceding subdivisions *five* such psalms, testifying by their number to their character as giving the exercises of the heart under divine government, this number is here found *multiplied* by that number *three*, which, intensified by *self*-multiplication, characterises the Messianic psalms preceding as manifesting God. There are now *fifteen* instead of *five;* and these are actually divided into 3 x 5: the first five giving the ground of the soul's confidence in God; the second five, the salvation itself, in its detail of various blessing; while the third maintains the holiness of God, both in His judgment of the wicked and in His grace to the saint. Thus the section as a whole gives the witness of faith to the salvation already announced: there seen objectively, it is now subjectively experienced.

Series 1.

The grounds of the soul's confidence are first of all put before us. First of these, we have necessarily the righteousness of God in grace, which atonement has established as the principle of His ways with those who turn to Him. All is surely in place here. Yet we must not look for the same apprehension of the gospel as is found under the full revelation of it now. Principles may be accepted without the knowledge of their complete application; and the blessedness of a place in Christ remained in Old Testament times a mystery still unrevealed (Eph. iii. 5, 6). The foundation has been laid upon which the whole superstructure of blessing shall in due time be built: the building upon it we must not expect to find as yet in an advanced state. We are here in the midst of a remnant of Israel, not a company of Christians, dowered with the witnessing "Spirit of adoption." But this difference we shall be better able to appreciate as we go through these psalms.

PSALM XXV.

God's grace apprehended by the soul brings it the light which manifests it to itself, and opens the heart for its reception. So "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (Jno. i. 17). And so in the thirty-second psalm we find the one "to whom the Lord will not impute sin" is (as a consequence) one "in whose spirit there is no guile." This is simple enough to understand: we cannot refuse confidence, where love like this invites it. And thus it is that in this psalm first we find the full and unreserved confession of sin. God, it is seen, acts "for His name's sake,"—to declare what He is: and it can thus be pleaded, "Pardon mine iniquity: *for it is great.*" The greatness of the iniquity will only magnify the grace that puts it away. He to whom much is forgiven, the same will love much. Thus fullest grace is what does—and alone does—the work of holiness: the heart set free is bound forever to God by the deliverance.

The psalm is alphabetic, two letters being omitted, however,—*rau* and *koph*, answering numerically to 6 and 100*; in place of which *resh* (200) has two verses, and one verse with *pe* is added at the end; or else *tau*, the final letter, is to be taken as a two-versed section. But we shall be better able probably to inquire as to the significance of these changes, as we go through the psalm. Meanwhile the imperfect alphabet may remind us of the imperfection cleaving to all human apprehension of divine grace, and which is manifest in the psalm itself, while a defective life will be the sure accompaniment of this defective apprehension. All human failure—all the blots and disfigurements of a Christian life—are traceable to this: as surely as it is written, "Sin shall not have dominion over

* Each letter in the Hebrew standing also for a numeral, as in the Greek alphabet.

SEC. 2. (Ps. xxv.-xxxix.)
The Testimony of Faith in this Salvation.

SERIES 1. (Psalms xxv.-xxix.)
The grounds of confidence.

Ps. xxv.

1 (1-3): The Faithful and Unchangeable.

(i.) a cry to Jehovah.

(ii.) The plea of faith.

[1]PSALM XXV.

Righteousness in grace.

[A psalm] of David.

(*Aleph.*)
UNTO [v]thee, Jehovah,
I lift up my soul.
(*Beth.*) My God, I have [w]trusted in thee; let me not be [x]ashamed:
let not mine [y]enemies exult over me!

v Lam. 3.41.
w cf. Ps.16.1 with Heb. 12. 2.
x Ps. 31. 1. Rom.10.11.
y Ps. 35.19. Ps. 27. 2.

you, because ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. vi. 14). Most important it is to realize this.

A common thought is that at least the *unbalanced* apprehension of grace tends to license; and in proof they would quote Jude's comment upon those who "turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness." But Jude's word is better translated "*changing* the grace of God;" and he is speaking, not of erring saints, but of "ungodly men." The common conception is that it is grace itself which, by an unguarded use of it,—a want of putting it under due conditions,—becomes thus capable of injuring the soul that too frankly and unreservedly commits itself to it. This is a great error, and one that leads to most mischievous results. One might as well think that too much holiness leads to wickedness, or too entire love to God to the casting off of holy fear of Him.

When the apostle speaks of the dominion of sin being taken away from the soul under grace, he is clearly speaking of this very apprehension of grace. He goes on to show us the contrary effect of law, and plainly to one apprehending himself under it. The effect is the discovery of a law of sin to which he is in bondage: thus sin *has* dominion for the man under law.

Grace is the opposite of law, and the *effect* is therefore the exact opposite. It is the antidote to the law of sin, the setting free from bondage to it: it is power for holiness, inasmuch as it establishes the sovereignty of God over us: God who is "love," and whose kingdom in the heart can only be realized as the heart is laid hold of for Him—is bound to Him by every faculty of its being. This is what faith produces—the response of the heart to the grace that seeks us,—the grace that in Christ has revealed God in His glory to us, so that He should *be* God: the light in which we see light evermore.

"Grace reigns"—is sovereign, absolute, to the children of God. *Not* to the setting aside of government, of holy government, but the very contrary. Grace, declared to us in Christ, in the awful, glorious atonement through the cross, secures to us even the needed discipline of a Father's hand, by which He shows Himself as such: for "what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?" This too is grace, divine favor, taking account of all that it sees in us that is contrary to God; *not* to bring it against us, but to separate us from it, and work in us conformity to His nature and will. Nothing else would *be* grace but this sweet, holy, divine action of a Love, for us, just while against the evil in us, wise beyond all our apprehensions of it, strong, so as never to be defeated in its purpose, which is perfect unending blessing. How could any one imagine ill to come, or unholiness to be the fruit, of entire self-committal to such a grace as this? Ungodly men they are, and must be, that *change* this into licentiousness. Grace needs no balancing with conditions, no modification with another principle, to make it holy: it is that in its essential nature.

1. The psalm is throughout a prayer, except in the third section, which is almost entirely statement, a declaration of what Jehovah is, in those dealings

(iii.) an appeal to holiness.

2 (4-7): Dependence for salvation. (i.) the spirit of obedience (ii.) acquired in the knowledge of salvation as with God.

(*Gimel.*) Yea, [z]none that wait on thee shall be ashamed:
[a]they shall be ashamed, who deal falsely without cause.

(*Daleth.*) Make me to know [b]thy ways, Jehovah!
teach me thy paths!
(*He.*) Direct me in thy [c]faithfulness, and teach me;
for thou art the God of my [d]salvation:
on thee I wait [e]all the day long.

[z] Rom. 9.33.
[a] Ps. 6. 10. Ps. 31. 17, 18.
[b] Ex. 33. 13. Ps. 103. 7. ver. 12.
[c] Ps. 143. 1. Ps. 32. 8.
[d] Ps. 27. 1,9.
[e] Ps. 27. 14. *cf.* Ps. 35. 28.

with men which make known the glory of His name. Jehovah is, as that, the God of redemption and of covenant, the living, unchanging God whom man in his feebleness and inconstancy needs so to be with him. All the way through this first book of the Psalms, this Name therefore is pre-eminent. Faith anchors itself in this fastness, and the great mountains of God's faithfulness rise all around its shelter. He so far above, to Him the soul lifts up itself, with felt distance enough to make it yearn, and yet while and because it knows Him after whom it yearns. Enemies too are in view, but faith says and sings that it shall not be ashamed; yea, that none that wait on Jehovah shall be ashamed, while it sees in God's holiness the doom of transgressors. For itself it can only say, (and it is enough to say,) that it "trusts" and "waits."

2. The second section is still prayer; and in the nature of this it reveals that difference between the old dispensation and the new which is so often facing us. The consciousness of sin and need, however, is met by the assurance of God's mercy, which in the third section is expanded into a much fuller and more satisfying statement.

In the first verse here the spirit of obedience is expressed, the necessary effect of divine grace, and of any true and living faith in the soul. Even when, in darkness yet as to the gospel, it makes its vows and resolutions of service to the Lord, with all the deplorable self-righteousness that is in this, yet, if truly seeking after God, this spirit will be found. The legality in it will be purged out; but the spirit of obedience will grow and develop just in proportion as God Himself is known and the freed heart rests and delights itself in Him.

"Make me to know Thy ways, Jehovah! teach me Thy paths!" These are not simply ways in which He would have us walk, but ways which are in principle His own ways. We are called and privileged to "be imitators of God, as dear children" (Eph. v. 1, *Gk.*). And even the "obedience," which is for us an essential element in this, the Son of God has "learned," and learned in suffering, too, down here among us (Heb. v. 8). What an incentive and encouragement for us!

And this God, whose ways we are called to know, is the "God of salvation." This is the spring of worship, as the Lord showed at the well of Sychar (Jno iv. 22); and the spirit of worship is of necessity the spirit of obedience also. This needs no demonstration. Nay, the salvation itself is, of course, a salvation from *sin*, or it were none at all. How suitable then is the argument, "Direct me in Thy faithfulness, and teach me; for Thou art the God of my salvation"! Faithful He must be to this purpose of His heart; and the glad soul may without weariness "wait upon Him all the day long." Thus it gathers strength, for waiting on Him is itself rest: His patience is that of Almighty power, to which nothing can be ever lacking.

The next verse breathes of the freedom of soul resulting from such knowledge. The psalmist can venture to put God in mind of those unchanging loving-kindnesses which are but the display therefore of His own nature. And thus it may seem but childishness to be putting Him in mind at all. Will the Unchangeable change? Can the Eternal forget? The very prayer avows itself to be mere human weakness, which, however, itself so strongly appeals to these "tender compassions" of God. Nor are we to make His perfections a restraint upon our

(iii.) remember.

(*Zain.*) Remember, Jehovah, thy [f]tender compassions and thy mercies;
for they are from everlasting.

(iv.) mercy because of sin.

(*Cheth.*) The [g]sins of my youth, and my revoltings, remember not:
according to thy mercy remember me;
for thy [h]goodness' sake, Jehovah.

3 (8-14): God acting for His name.

(i.) self-consistent.

(*Teth.*) Good and upright is Jehovah:
therefore will he [i]guide sinners in the way.

[f] Ps. 42. 8. Ps. 103. 4.

[g] Job 13. 26. Jer. 3. 25. *ctr.* Heb. 8. 12.

[h] Ps. 51. 1. Ps. 103. 1-3.

[i] Ps. 31. 3.

prayers, but the contrary,—our encouragement to them. Otherwise all prayer would cease at once: for think of influencing the Unchangeable, or even of telling anything to the Omniscient! And yet He must be both of these, or the wings on which we rise would be crippled at once.

How truly we may be thankful then for these prayers, taught of that Spirit who "maketh intercession for the saints according to God!" He then "maketh intercession"! and perhaps in the feebleness even of a "groaning which cannot be uttered"—to *us*, of course, unintelligible (Rom. viii. 26). *We* are not competent to argue in this way from infinity; and for us what a loss it would be to stifle the utterance which presses so to be uttered, and which, if it be the "fervent, effectual prayer of the righteous, *availeth much*" (Jas. v. 16). So the word of God itself assures us.

Let then our prayers bear witness of our feebleness, yet may we, with crippled Jacob, have "power with God and prevail." It were the destruction of freedom to restrain with His perfection the pouring out of our hearts before Him to which we are invited. He knows all that is in ours, who yet invites us.

But how good to have the requests to make of Him, which, if He but remember His own perfections, He will surely grant! And in all the matter of salvation, which is the matter here, this is assuredly the case. Salvation is the issue of His own counsels, the outflow of His love, the very display of His own righteousness and holiness. Thus all that He is, pledges itself at once to the lost one who puts himself as such into His hands for the fulfillment to him of this glorious purpose. This we shall find directly more fully expressed.

And now comes the confession. There are "sins and revoltings" *not* to be remembered: and we know the provision which divine mercy, in the new covenant, has made for this. In Israel, year by year, the scape-goat carried away the sins of the people into a place cut off; and the new covenant, in the mouth of Jeremiah, explicitly declares, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." No specifications here,—no exceptions: how blessed the wide sweep of a statement like this! the universality from which nothing is excluded. Thus well may the soul say, "According to thy mercy remember *me*, for thy goodness' sake, Jehovah!" The thief on the cross could say as much; and the Lord *more* than answers that bold, confiding prayer: "Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." When ever did the answer come from God: "You have counted on Me too much: you have imagined in Me a mercy that I have not"?

3. Now therefore the soul can confess something more than its "sins." It can speak of the "virtues of Him who hath called it out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Pet. ii. 9). God in the salvation He has provided manifests Himself; for He has indeed acted for Himself, to satisfy Himself, to give way to His love; and this is the power of the gospel to reconcile—strange words as to the relation between a creature and its God!—to reconcile the heart to Him. The work of the Cross itself is not to present a *motive* to save, but to *enable* Him to do it consistently with His own righteousness. God acts for His own Name: to display Himself, which is just the supreme blessing of His creatures, that we should know Him. To "know Him, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent" (Jno. xvii. 3) is the true pulse-wave in our souls of eternal life.

(ii.) the humble taught judgment.
(iii.) holiness manifested.

(*Jod.*) The [j]humble will he guide in judgment:
and the humble he will teach his way.
(*Caph.*) [k]All the paths of Jehovah are mercy and truth,
toward those who [l]observe his covenant and his
testimonies.

[j] Ps. 22. 26. *ctr.* Amos 2. 7.
[k] Ps. 65. 11. Prov. 4. 18.
[l] Ps. 103. 17, 18.

Thus the psalmist now begins: "Good and upright is Jehovah: *therefore* will He guide sinners in the way." If there be but the least real desire after that which is good, it is impossible for Him to be indifferent to it. The need of atonement is not spoken of here, nor indeed, as we shall see, in the whole psalm; but the provision of atonement only shows how thoroughly God is for the soul that turns to him. But there is none the less a condition required upon man's part: "the *humble* will He guide in judgment; and the humble He will teach His way." This is as right as the other, and it accounts for our being such poor learners at the best. Humility is the necessary condition of learning in every department of knowledge. To know that we know not marks and makes the true inquirer. And above all must we come to God, not as critics or philosophers, but as babes and weaklings: and this is the plainest judgment of reason itself. Yet this does not mean that He disregards or confounds the faculties He has given. He is light; and He leads in the light. Even so, we have to remember, not our littleness only, but our sinfulness, which tends largely to pervert reason itself. But God does not on this account set aside these enfeebled powers; He does not in this sense "lead the blind by a way they know not"—which is true of *providential* guidance only: here, on the other hand, He "*opens* the blind eyes", purges and rectifies the vision of those that wait on Him; and even the depths that transcend our knowledge are seen not as if filled with a fog that *shuts out* vision, but as the infiniteness between the stars, where the sight itself —welcomed while it lasts—fails through feebleness, because of the greatness of what it surveys.

For "the humble will He guide in *judgment*"—discernment, that is, of difference. The understanding is *opened;* as it was said to the disciples, "then opened He their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures." Ignorance is not for us the "mother of devotion"; no, nor the child either: it is true that for superstition it is mother and child both; but sanctification is through the truth, and therefore by what is known as truth. Ah, in this way, we may easily indeed dishonour our faculties, and dishonour God in them; yea, dishonor Him of whom it has been said, "He shall lead you into *all* truth" (Jno. xvi. 13). So then as Christians to doubt our capacity for this, is to doubt the promise of Christ, and the power of the Holy "Spirit of truth."

The moral character of such guidance distinguishes it from the mere working of the natural intellect. "The knowledge of the *holy*" it is that "is understanding" (Prov. ix. 10). And so here: "all the paths of Jehovah are mercy and truth toward those who observe His covenant and His testimonies."

Here indeed was a serious difficulty for the Israelite—the nature of that "covenant" under which he was with God. The law, as the apostle declares (2 Cor. iii.) and the experience of every honest-hearted man confirms, was but the "ministration of death" and "condemnation." None could face its requirements without the cry which we find in the Psalms themselves, "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord; for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified." (Ps. cxliii. 2.) If then the law as thus confessed could justify no one, plainly faith, to find courage or comfort at all, must draw this from the foresight of Him whose image was in the sacrifices which the law itself ordained. The believers of those days were, as we are told, "kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed" (Gal. iii. 23), with a certain knowledge surely, though variable and fluctuating, of the grace that was to come. This we shall be able to estimate better in the future. Meanwhile the "covenant"—whatever supplement might by and bye be made to it—remained the expression of relationship to Jehovah, their heart able even to delight in the law

(iv.) the plea of the sinner.

(v.) the soul under government.

(*Lamed.*) For thy [m]name's sake, Jehovah,
pardon mine iniquity; for it is [n]great.
(*Mem.*) What man is he that [o]feareth Jehovah?
he shall guide him in the way he chooseth.

m Ps. 79. 9. Jer. 14. 7, 21.
n cf. Is. 1.18. *cf.* Lk.7.47. *cf.* Rom. 5. 20.
o Ps. 128. 1, etc.

as holy, just, and good, spite of the certainty that by it they could not stand before God. The condition was an anomalous one; but the practical state of many a child of God to-day is not less anomalous, and depends too upon the same thing, the mingling together of contradictory elements, which will not really mingle,—a law by which God "can by no means clear the guilty," and a grace in which He "justifieth the ungodly."

For us, however, the perplexity is gone, for the old covenant is gone; and for Israel, when once more they become the people of God, it will be under that new covenant which is grace absolute and unclouded. The remnant, however, for whom these psalms make specific provision will inherit the perplexities of preceding generations; and here they will find how mercy has anticipated their need, and furnished them with the "steps" needed by which they will be able to pass the "slough of despond," and reach the firmer ground beyond. They will find here expressions of confidence in God on the part of those owning themselves sinners in the fullest way, and who could speak, as in this case, at the same time of the "covenant." They will have also—as David had not—Jeremiah's announcement of a future "*new* covenant."

Whatever the darkness, the faith that clings to God makes no mistake, nor can He be wanting to it. And so this verse itself declares. "Mercy" is pledged to, as it is needed by, those who in their hearts "observe Jehovah's covenant and His testimonies." Holiness is thoroughly maintained, while grace is manifested. "Mercy" leads to and introduces "truth"; and "*all* the paths of Jehovah" declare these things unitedly. "Mercy and truth" thus "met together", "righteousness and peace" will "kiss each other." The eighty-fifth psalm shows this accomplished.

It is in confidence then that the prayer is uttered: "for Thy name's sake, Jehovah, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great." Great sin is great need; great sin pardoned is great grace; consciousness of great sin pardoned makes the heart love much. All this the Lord has Himself shown out in the case of the sinful woman in the Pharisee's house. The fullest gospel we thus find to be the holiest gospel. *Grace* we see to be the effectual conqueror of sin. Thus, even, the Lord makes known and glorifies His Name in its forgiveness.

We must not expect the Psalms to go beyond this. Justification and the place in Christ were as yet unknown: even in the New Testament we have to wait for the apostle Paul and his gospel to find these developed; but the consideration of what is involved in all this will more naturally come before us when we reach the nearest point of view from which to contemplate it: and that will be found in the thirty-second psalm.

The fear of Jehovah is the next thing dwelt upon, and is that to which the knowledge of His grace, where real, will surely lead. "There is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be *feared.*" We might imagine, perhaps, that it would be rather said "*loved;*" but we may be assured that there is no mistake. The intimacy to which grace leads—the knowledge of God thus acquired by one brought to Him—dispels, of course, not produces, *slavish* fear. And so it is written: "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment: he that feareth is not made perfect in love" (1 Jno. iv. 18): he is like a scholar with an ill-learned lesson, not perfect in that which God in the gospel has been teaching us earnestly.

On the other hand, the light and flippant carelessness by which some would show us their intimacy with God, their knowledge of His grace, proves to absolute demonstration their ignorance of what they profess. He who has seen the Alps but at a distance, may think but little of their majestic height. The nearer

(vi.) mastery.

(*Nun.*) His soul shall dwell in [p] prosperity,
and his seed shall [q] possess the land.

(vii.) perfect blessing.

(*Samech.*) The [r] secret of Jehovah is with them that fear him,
and his covenant, to show it to them.

[p] Ps. 119. 165.
[q] Ps. 37. 11, 29. Prov. 2. 21. *cf.* Ezek. 48. 1, etc.
[r] Prov. 3. 32. *cf.* Jno. 15. 15.

we approach, the more they put on grandeur; at their very foot, they tower up in masses which scale the heavens, and make us realize our utter insignificance. How much more, then, will the awful majesty of God be felt by one who has stood in His presence! The little reverence shown to-day, even by Christians, the freedom of their bold speculations, their critical proficiency in sacred things, the prominence assigned to the "human element" everywhere, reveal plainly enough the citizen of the world's cities, rather than the one who in the stillness of the desert or the mountain top has drawn near, with unshod feet, to God. And thus the man who professedly has the fear of the Lord, cares little to be guided "in the way HE chooseth." He must walk, as he recognizes, in ways morally right; nay, what is this must be estimated from a general Christian stand-point, which means perhaps even something somewhat higher than the average conscience of the special Christian community to which he is attached; but "the way HE chooseth,"—how little is this anywhere regarded! how little is even the lack of it known!

Take the Word as guiding: how generally—almost universally—is it too accepted just as interpreted by the people among whom we are (I may say) *thrown;* how few venture to differ from the fashion in which it is read by these! And the *personal* guidance day by day as to the details of life, how little, it is to be feared, is this found by "watching daily at the gates" of infinite Wisdom, "waiting at the posts of her doors" (Prov. viii. 34)! Yet of such is it said that the man is "blessed." For each of us there is *individual* guidance: God loving to have us thus apart for Himself; to each one of us the Lord says, "Follow thou Me!" Real communion with the Lord involves this necessarily.

The connection of the next verse with this seems to be what stamps it with its number 6, which must here speak of mastery. For Israel the possession of the land was originally to be won from the Canaanites, and much of it slipped shortly out of their hands after being thus won. Philistines and Amorites pushed back Dan into the mountains; Hazor became after Joshua's time the seat of the kingdom of another Jabin; Reuben lost his cities to Moab. After David and Solomon, the broken kingdom began gradually to yield piecemeal to its foes, until first Assyria and then Babylon carried the whole people captive. After the return, but a fragment of the land was repossessed. The Assyrian captives did not return at all. Samaria was schismatic and hostile. Galilee remained characteristically "Galilee of the Gentiles." Then at last came One who would have gathered them, and they would not, and they bought Aceldama with the price of their Lord's betrayal. Again they were scattered, and the whole world has been to them since, according to the terms of their dread purchase, "a burial-ground for strangers." Thus the possession of the land has been for Israel more plainly than for any other people, a question of mastery, but in which the fear of Jehovah was ever the real condition. Did they fear Him, *their* fear was upon their enemies. When finally their heart turns to the Lord, and the veil upon it is removed, then the word will be fulfilled, "I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor"—of self-judgment—"for a door of hope" (Hos. ii. 15).

All this has an application for us also, and a *present* application, just as Ephesians, interpreting the book of Joshua, has shown us a present possession of our land which is to be made good by faith, and against the might of banded enemies. Israel's history has here its solemn instruction for us. Never yet has the full extent of the divine gift been realized by them, and for the most part they came sadly short. Have Christians done better as to their spiritual inheritance? Yet not for discouragement, but for encouragement, would one urge this.

4 (15–20): The way of trial. (i.) constant looking to Jehovah. (ii.) the external evil. (iii.) the inward distress. (iv.) man. (*a*) self. (*b*) enemies. (v.) the weak with the mighty.

(*Ayin.*) Mine [s]eyes are constantly toward Jehovah:
for he shall bring my feet out of the net.
(*Pe.*) Turn thee unto me, and be gracious to me,
for I am [t]solitary and afflicted.
(*Tsaddi.*) The distresses of my heart are [u]increased:
bring thou me out of my troubles!
(*Resh.*) Look on mine affliction and travail,
and take away all my [v]sins!
Look on mine enemies, for they are multiplied;
and they hate me with violent hatred.
(*Schin.*) Keep my soul, and [w]deliver me:
let me not be ashamed, for in thee have I taken refuge.

[s] 2 Chr. 20. 12. Ps. 123. 1, 2. Ps. 141. 8.
[t] Ps. 102. 7. Ps. 38. 11.
[u] Ps. 3. 1.
[v] ver. 7. *ctr.* Ps. 7. 3–5.
[w] Ps. 6. 4. Ps. 140. 1.

"There remaineth very much land to be possessed"; and the promise here is strictly individual: what may not faith, in any one of us, even now attain to? what mines of treasure unworked, what fields ready to be harvested, await the man earnest enough to press on after them, whole-hearted enough to take possession!

And again the word pursues us here: "The *secret* of Jehovah is with them that fear Him; and His covenant, to show it to them." Think of being, as it were, the bosom friends of God, to whom He can speak freely of what is hidden from the rest of men! Here is surely complete blessing. Herein is communion perfected. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secrets unto His servants the prophets." (Amos iii. 7.) Is it of Him if we should have to say, "We see not our signs; there is not a prophet any more"? (Ps. lxxiv. 9.) Is there no connection with this when the apostle exhorts us all to "*covet* to prophesy"? (1 Cor. xiv. 39.)

4. And now we are to face the way of trial. The world is unfailingly that, and Satan himself the sifter of God's wheat. Here we find it, and find it, spite of all that has been said, a very real thing. Indeed it must be felt; for trial that is not felt is not trial; and God has a work to be wrought in us by this, "tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope" (Rom. v. 3, 4). And James urges, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience; but let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." (Jas. i. 2–4.)

"Sweet," then indeed, "are the uses of adversity," if they can accomplish for us anything like this. And we see clearly what the great use is. "Patience"—the subjection of our wills, "man's weakness waiting upon God," is the unfailing argument to bring Him in. Only to learn this, this is to be perfect and entire! How easy, one would think, if this be all, just to abide in the place of nothingness, and let God care and minister and show His wisdom and His power and love! Blessed it is, and *should be* easy; but here it is we prove the will that works in us, the lack of faith which allows will to work. Faith is, in all of us, the great worker of all good: it is no wonder if God try it, call for it, ordain the path to be such as shall require it constantly; while yet He encourages, sustains, answers it with a love which more and more makes the experience of the way an experience that works hope. "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us."

The pathway of the remnant of Judah in that day towards which prophecy so often turns is one of peculiar trial. "It is the time of *Jacob's* trouble," revealed thus as special discipline: a time of trouble "such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matt. xxiv. 21). We can understand therefore the character of what follows here, even while the first words declare the blessing it is working for them: "Mine eyes are *constantly* toward Jehovah; for He shall bring my feet out of the net." This constant look

5 (21, 22): way and end. (i.) integrity. (ii.) redemption.

(*Tau*) [z]Integrity and uprightness shall preserve me:
for I wait on thee.
Redeem [y]Israel, O God,
out of all his distresses!

[x] Ps. 7. 3, etc.

[y] Ps. 130. 8. Ps. 14. 7.

Ps. xxvi.

[2]PSALM XXVI.

Separation from sinners.

[A psalm] of David.

1 (1-3): The plea of integrity. (i.) conviction of truth.

[z]JUDGE me, Jehovah, for I have walked in mine integrity:
I have [a]trusted also in Jehovah:
I shall not slip.

[z] Ps. 7. 8. Ps. 35. 24.

[a] Ps. 31. 1. Ps. 34. 8. Ps. 37. 31.

upwards: how much blessing does it import, whatever the stress of circumstance that produces it! The net is at the feet, and yet the eyes are not there, but constantly above. A brighter object is before them than the earth can furnish, and the heart is steadied and brightened by it. The feet also are better kept than by any possible human wisdom: "*He shall* bring" rings cheerily out from a man not ignorant of his danger, but who has learned how much more positive he may be in the third person than in the first.

Yet the evil presses hard, and matters seem as if God were looking away: "*Turn* thee unto me, and be gracious to me: for I am solitary and afflicted." Sorrow individualizes us all, and that is part of the good of it: for thus grace and God become individualized also. The evil presses for attention. God suffers it to be felt, and even to increase: enlarged distresses—when working under the good hand of God—purify and enlarge the heart. This is by no means their necessary effect, however: apart from Him, they may harden and narrow it. But then apart from Him, prosperity will do the same: nothing is good, save as He works in it and through it for good.

In result, man is sifted and known: *oneself*, in whom affliction and travail connect themselves ever more closely with the sins of which the soul is ever more conscious. The enemies also are there, multiplied and violent. Jehovah is besought to regard it all, and not to make ashamed the faith which can find refuge only in Himself.

5. Two verses express finally the principle upon which the blessing comes. Integrity, uprightness, faith on the soul's part; the redemption from His hand who alone can effect it. In the last verse the speaker links the redemption of Israel with his own.

Psalm XXVI.

The twenty-sixth psalm is much shorter, much simpler in character, and in every way less attractive in its theme. Yet it has its place, and fills it, in the divine wisdom—a place the importance of which is seen in its being only next to the very first. We must, first of all, necessarily, learn the grace which alone gives confidence to lay hold of God at all; but having learned this, we have thus passed the line which divides the world into two companies. We have become His, and the mass of men are, alas, hostile to Him. Henceforth separation from evil-doers becomes the necessary condition of going on with God. This is the principle of the psalm before us, conformity to it the plea advanced by the soul: I have separated myself from sinners; unite me not with them:—a true ground of confidence before God, although plainly secondary only. Association is made much of in Scripture, though even Christians (save with the grossest forms of evil) make light of it to-day. Yet "Scripture cannot be broken:" God will be found to be what His word declares Him.

The twelve verses again show the soul under divine government, although there is once more, as we found in the case of the fifth psalm, a departure from

(ii.) discern & pronounce! (iii.) fruit of realization of the divine character.
2 (4, 5): Testified by association, (i.) which requires truth (ii.) and refuses evil.
3 (6-8): In true sanctification to God. (i.) approaching Jehovah in innocency. (ii.) to testify of Him.

Try me, Jehovah, and [b]prove me:
assay my reins and my heart!
For thy [c]mercy is before mine eyes,
and I have [d]walked in thy truth.

I have not [e]sat with men of falsehood,
and do not go with dissemblers.
I have [f]hated the congregation of evil-doers,
and do not sit with the wicked.

I will [g]wash my hands in innocency,
and compass thine [h]altar, Jehovah:
To publish with the voice of [i]thanksgiving,
and tell of all thy wondrous works.

b Ps. 139. 1, 23, 24. Jer. 12. 3. Mal. 3. 3.
c Ps. 25. 6.
d Gen. 17 1. 1 Ki. 2. 4. 1 Ki. 3. 6.
e Ps. 1. 1. Jer. 15. 17.
f Ps. 31. 6. Ps. 139. 21, 22. Ps. 5. 5. Ps. 11. 5. *cf.* Hos. 9. 15 with Jno. 3. 16.
g Ps. 24. 4. 1 Tim. 2. 8. *ctr.* Matt. 27. 24.
cf. Deut. 21. 6. *h* Ps. 84. 3. *i* Ps. 106. 1; Ps. 107. 1; Ps. 118. 1.

the usual 3 x 4 division. This time it is the second section which is shortened by one verse, in order to supply a fifth section at the end. Governmental *ways* are thus emphasized, as well as the fact that God has become Lord, in the heart made captive by the grace exhibited.

1. The psalm is so simple as not to need lengthened comment. We have first the plea of integrity which is the accompaniment and fruit also of faith. With the conviction that this is truly his condition, he can appeal to God to try him: to make proof of his reins, (his inmost thoughts,) and his heart. He has learned in the mercy of God to fear Him, and in the truth which he realizes in Him he has walked himself.

2. Hence of necessity his path is now with those only who follow what is true. With the false and dissembling he does not go; and gatherings of evil-doers, brought together by their common wickedness, he refuses and abhors.

Scripture, whether in the Old Testament or the New, makes much of association, and necessarily, for it is a principle of the greatest moral significance, and the world notes it after its manner, and comments upon it as the Scripture does. "Birds of a feather flock together." "Tell me who are your companions, and I will tell you who you are." Our associations are thus a kind of self-classification; and the spiritual life is specially sensitive to the air it breathes. We all know that in Christ's name, and for His sake, we may enter boldly the worst dens of iniquity, if He call us to it; and we all know enough to distinguish this from association with evil. But the least voluntary link is a most serious thing. The *two* verses of this section may remind us of *testimony;* which equally defines our liberty and its restrictions.

3. The third section is a very clearly marked Levitical one. It shows the nature of the separation just declared and the spirit in which alone it can be rightly observed. We cannot bring defilement into the presence of God. We cannot force the holy into communion with the unholy. We can, alas, in the effort to do so, fall ourselves from communion. True separation from evil is in order to separation to God. It springs out of and unites itself with all real sanctification.

The first point then here is "innocency," the washing of the hands being an expression derived from the ordinance in Deuteronomy (xxi. 6), where the elders wash their hands to attest their innocence of a murder in the neighborhood of their city. The psalmist means therefore to assert his readiness to pledge himself in like manner that he is not bringing defilement to Jehovah's altar, where his praise-offering is to be offered (Lev. vii. 11, *sq.*). But who could praise Jehovah, lifting up unclean hands to Him? And this is with the psalmist no mere outward homage. His heart is won: he has loved the habitation of Jehovah's house, and the place where His glory dwells.

4. On this the plea is based: unite me not then with those from whom I have separated myself; "gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with the very

(iii.) loving His habitation.
4 (9-11): Tested by the walk.
(i.) Unite me not with sinners,
(ii.) whose works testify against them.
(iii.) to me, set apart to Thee, let Thy grace be manifested.
5 (12): the governmental result.

Jehovah, I have loved the habitation of thy [j]house,
and the place where thy [k]glory dwelleth.

Gather not my soul with [l]sinners,
nor my life with men of blood:
In whose hands is mischief;
and their right hand is full of [m]bribes.
But as for me, I walk in mine [n]integrity:
redeem me and be [o]gracious unto me!

My foot standeth in an even place:
in the [p]congregations will I bless Jehovah.

j Ps. 23. 6. Ps. 27. 4. Ps. 84. 1.
k 2 Chr. 7. 2. Isa. 6. 1-4. *cf.* Hag. 2. 7-9.
l Ps. 28. 3. *cf.* Matt. 24. 51.
m Deut. 16. 19. *ctr.* Num. 22. 7. *cf.* Rev. 13. 16, 17.
n ver. 1.
o Ps. 25. 16. Ps. 56. 1. Ps. 57. 1.
p Ps. 1. 5; Ps. 111. 1.

men that would destroy my life: whose hands are full of mischief to those who refuse their alliance, or whose spoil they crave;—full of bribes to those whom they would corrupt." The practical test gives clear result in their case: it is as clear, he says, in his own: "As for me, I walk in mine integrity: redeem me and be gracious unto me."

5. The psalm closes with the answer declared. The issue is found; the government of God manifests itself: the foot of the suppliant is made to stand in an even place (*mishor*), the word, however, having special and significant relation to the portion of Reuben,*—in type the "upland" pastures of faith (Josh. xiii., *notes*). There, in the sunny and unobstructed high levels in which the child of God finds his inheritance and blessing, the foot that goes not in the company of evil-doers stands firm now; and in the congregations of Jehovah's people the soul can freely praise the One in unchangeable covenant with them all. Thus he has his company, and, choosing where God has chosen, his voice is heard in the concert of praise where none can be silent,—where every separate note is in harmony with the universal song.

Psalm XXVII.

The third psalm of this series emphasizes the positive side of the separation from evil, that which makes it true sanctification, the longing desire after Jehovah Himself. This has been already expressed in the previous psalm, but here it is the theme. And this being the fruit of Jehovah's own work in the soul,—the response to His own invitation and command to seek His face,—how could the faithful and unchangeable One possibly deny or draw back from him who now drew near to Him? He had said, "Seek ye My face!" could He have said that in vain? Here then is a third ground of confidence for the heart; and it is a sure one at all times. He who has said, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest," has added to this no limiting word, to be a means of doubt and self-torture to him who would gladly obey His invitation. Nay, He has taken care rather to give special assurance to the laboring and heavy-laden, to those consciously sinners, to the "lost," that His salvation is for them. And to *all* that come, without exception, He has declared: "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." Well may this then be a perfect ground of confidence for the soul that turns to Him for refuge from sin and self, from the judgment to come, from the uncontrollable evil within. Here is the one Haven of refuge, the Shelter from the storm, the Rock of defence: and "blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

1. The psalm begins with a joyous strain of confidence, in which all fear is dismissed as unworthy and impossible. "Jehovah is my light and my salva-

* "It occurs in the Bible in the following passages:—Deut. iii. 10, iv. 43; Josh. xiii. 9, 16, 17, 21; xx. 8; 1 Ki. xx. 23, 25: 2 Chron. xxvi. 10; Jer. xlviii. 8, 21. In each of these, with one exception, it is used for the district in the neighborhood of Heshbon and Dibon—the *Belka* of the modern Arabs, their most noted pasture-ground." (Grove, in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible.)

Ps. xxvii.

[3]PSALM XXVII.

The heart's desire after Jehovah's house and face.

[A psalm] of David.

1 (1): Jehovah, the soul's strength and peace.

JEHOVAH is my [q]light and my [r]salvation: of [s]whom shall I be afraid?
Jehovah is the [t]stronghold of my life: of whom shall I be in dread?

2 (2, 3): In the midst of conflict. (i.) the sufficiency of God. (ii.) the assurance of faith.

When [u]evil-doers came upon me, my oppressors and enemies, to eat up my flesh,
they [v]stumbled and fell.
Though a [w]host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear:
though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.

[q] Ps. 34. 5. *cf.* Jno. 8. 12. *cf.* Rev. 21. 23.
[r] Ex. 14. 13. Job 13. 15, 16. Ps. 62. 2. Isa. 12. 2, 3.
[s] Ps. 3. 6.
[t] Ps. 28. 8. Isa. 25. 4. *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 9.
[u] Ps. 3. 1.
[v] *cf.* Ps. 22. 11–13 with Jno. 18. 1–6. *ctr.* Jno. 18. 11, 12.
[w] *cf.* 2 Ki. 6. 14–17.

tion: of whom shall I be afraid? Jehovah is the stronghold of my life: of whom shall I be in dread?" The argument is short and complete; all the more complete that it does not look round or take account of any special evils, but looks up, and only needs to look up, into Jehovah's face. The "light" not merely manifests what is around me: it is God Himself who is manifested in it; and thus His own character becomes the conscious security of the soul. What an assurance—what a joy and blessing the light is! Beauty, warmth, the vigor of life itself, are all found in it; and thus salvation is closely connected with this primary thought. The light of the first day meant salvation out of its ruin for that world which it disclosed yet buried under the waters; the first pulsation of its rays was the throb of a new life which had come in for it. And with God known the light apprehended is the dawn of an endless day, the power of an eternal life begun, which is but the inner process accomplishing of His salvation.

2. Now we have the testimony of deliverance experienced and the argument from that experience. But the argument transcends the experience: the enemies that he has seen defeated swell into a host, the single battle lengthens into a war, and the sounds of strife which he imagines awaking around have no power to disturb his perfect trauquility. Experience has only called forth the intuition of faith which is not to be measured by it: to which indeed all experience must and does conform, because the law which underlies it has no exception. How grandly is Jehovah, the Unchangeable, realized in these abiding laws of His, which pervade the spiritual realm as they do the natural!

3. Thus the heart reposes in God its strength; and God becomes its one desire and sufficiency. "One thing have I asked of Jehovah; this do I seek after: that I may dwell in Jehovah's house all the days of my life, to behold the graciousness of Jehovah, and to inquire in His temple." One can imagine the attraction for a true Israelite of that place where Jehovah dwelt in the midst of the people, even though the inner sanctuary could not be penetrated. Faith would still, as it were, penetrate it, and God not withhold Himself from the heart thus longing after Him. These longings the Psalms exhibit to us, and they constitute largely the charm of this precious book. To us the "graciousness of Jehovah" has been displayed in a way which makes all that was known before to be only rudimentary knowledge. He has unveiled His glory. He has come out to walk amongst men. He has given us boldness to enter into the holiest, and an abiding place in His presence as priests and worshipers. And yet how little are we beyond the admonition of these yearnings of the men of an elder time! This "one thing" which some of them could speak of,—this burning, seraphic longing after One to sense the Invisible,—have we no need of self-questioning whether to us it is the passion that these psalms express? Ah, have we not need of it? Think of the complete revelation of God now made to us; think of the open vol-

3 (4-6): Sanctuary possessions.
(i.) God Himself the one thing sought.

[x] One thing have I asked of Jehovah; this do I seek after:
that I may [y] dwell in Jehovah's house all the [z] days of my life:
to behold the [a] graciousness of Jehovah, and to inquire in his temple.

(ii.) security.

For he shall lay me up in his pavilion in the [b] day of evil:
in the secret of his tent will he [c] secrete me;
he will lift me high upon a [d] rock.

(iii.) sacrifices of praise.

And now shall my [e] head be lifted up above mine enemies around me;
and I will sacrifice in his tent [f] sacrifices with joyful sound;
I will sing,—yea, I will sing praises to Jehovah.

x *cf.* Lk. 10. 42. *cf.* Phil. 3. 13. James 1. 8.
y Ps. 65. 4. Ps. 84. 4. Lk. 2. 37.
z Ps. 23. 6.
a Ps. 90. 17.
b *cf.* Ps. 20. 1. *cf.* Ezek. 7. 5-7. *cf.* Jer. 30. 7.
c Ps. 31. 20. Isa. 25. 4. Isa. 26. 20, 21.
d Ps. 18. 1, 2.
e Ps. 3. 3.
f *cf.* Lev. 7. 11-18. *cf.* 1 Ki. 8. 63, 64.

ume of Scripture in our hand; think of how of necessity the soul thirsting after God must turn to these stores of heavenly treasures, infinite yet accessible, and exult in the search, with the Spirit given to us, of the "deep things of God" (1 Cor. ii. 10); think of the intercourse, the communion, enjoyed by those who will come together to compare their individual gains in this way, sharing with others that which in being divided increases the more we divide it. There is no need to ask the extent to which all this is realized; and there can be only deepest humiliation in thinkiug of how little beyond the surface of Scripture we are or care to be. "To inquire in His temple," when its roof is the whole arch of heaven,—when its length stretches from the beginnings of history to the end of prophecy,—when His word and work unite in Christ as the Life-Centre and glory of all!—ah, how is it possible to imagine how little in eighteen centuries of a completed Bible and the indwelling Spirit has been attained!

The security of the sanctuary the psalmist dwells on next. "He shall lay me up in His pavilion in the day of evil; in the secret of His tent will He secrete me: He will lift me high upon a rock."

The immediate application here is to human adversaries, though the literal sanctuary furnishes, as is evident, only the figure of spiritual truths of much wider range. For us how surely it is true that the way of escape from spiritual foes is just what is here indicated! God has indeed lifted us high upon the rock-foundation of Christ's blessed work; and in Him entered into the heavenly sanctuary, we are securely hidden from the enemy. "Because I live," He says, "ye shall live also" (Jno. xiv. 19). He there too is our sanctification; and "we all, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory" (2 Cor. iii. 18). Thus the sanctuary is our safe retreat at all times: it is the place where the world takes its true shape for us, where the entanglement with it is loosed, the darkness and mists disappear, sin is rebuked and banished, the holiness of truth is found. The peace of that serene Presence incloses us as with the glory of an eternal summer, unvexed by even the threatening of a storm. Here the head is lifted up over all enemies therefore, and the sacrifice of praise becomes the necessary relief of a full and grateful heart.

4. From all this blessing and joy we drop into a state of trial, in which the voice of supplication is heard instead of praise, and that in tones of distress and uncertainty. Such alternations are common enough and rapid enough in the Psalms, and in the experience of those whose utterance the Psalms are. But the depths that the soul is plumbing are not bottomless. In the place of testing, the ground of his confidence is tested and found firm; and the language of faith becomes thus the language of experience also.

The cry is still to the Unchangeable (Jehovah), and this is the bottom in which faith's anchor alone can hold. The cry is for grace and needed answer,

4 (7-10): Tested & testing.
(i.) the cry to the Unchangeable.

Hear, Jehovah; with my voice I [g]call:
be gracious to me, and answer me!
To thee hath my heart said, "Seek ye my face"?—
thy face, Jehovah, I do [h]seek.

(ii.) the confidence.

[i]Hide not thy face from me!
put not thy servant away in [j]anger!
thou hast been my help:
cast me not off, and forsake me not, O God of my salvation.

(iii.) remember therefore!

(iv.) the experience foretold.

But when my [k]father and my mother forsake me,
Jehovah taketh me up.

5 (11-14): The weak with the Strong.
(i.) for guidance.

Teach me thy [l]way, Jehovah;
and lead me in an [m]even path, because of those watching me.

(ii.) for deliverance from enemies.

Give me not up to the desire of mine oppressors:
for [n]false witnesses are risen against me,
and those that breathe out violence.

(iii.) the realization of the unseen.

—[o]If I had not believed to see Jehovah's goodness
in the land of the [p]living!—

(iv.) the moral of experience.

[q]Wait on Jehovah!
be strong, and let thy heart take courage!
yea, wait upon Jehovah!

g Ps. 5. 3.
h ver. 4. Ps. 4. 6.
i Ps. 143. 7. Ps. 89. 46. Is. 45. 15. *ctr.* Rom. 8. 28.
j Ps. 6. 1.
k Ps. 103. 13. Is. 49. 15. Matt. 10. 36.
l Ps. 25. 4.
m Ps. 139. 24. Ps. 25. 10. *cf.* Jer. 6. 16.
n Ps. 35. 11.
o *cf.* Ps. 73. 2. Ps. 94. 17.
p Ps. 116. 9. Ps. 142. 5.
q Ps. 62. 1, 5. Lam. 3. 25, 26.

and then what gives confidence is declared and pleaded. This is Jehovah's own invitation and command to seek His face; to which faith has answered earnestly and gladly. The suppliant could say, "I do seek Thy face, Jehovah." And would *He* now hide that glorious face, and repel with anger him that sought Him? nay, would He, as it were, deny the help that He had given, and though the God looked to for salvation, cast off and forsake? No, assuredly; this could not be: the ground is firm, and the anchor holds; experience will confirm and not put the soul's confidence to shame: father and mother might forsake, but not He from whom came these relationships, with all their tender affection. *They* might forsake; not He: and if they did, all the more would Jehovah's pitifulness be shown out. Such an outcast would be the object of His special care.

5. Thus relieved and quieted, even though the circumstances remain unchanged, these can be made all the more an argument with the Lord to manifest His care. First of all, to make known His way: for there no pitfall is, and there He, the Wise and Strong, is. The real sense of weakness will not suffer us to seek our own will, but the contrary. What wisdom of our own can be like His? what tenderness like His? And under the eyes of those watching for one's halting, the path with Him will be found really the smooth one, for before Him the mountains are leveled to a plain.

Oppressors are still there, false witnesses, those whose panting eagerness breathes out violence: these the suppliant points out to the Guide and Guard with whom He goes. But he walks firmly, if humbly, counting on deliverance. And the pressure felt in the soul is only made known in the outburst which at the same time reveals the confidence which supports it,—"If I had *not* believed"—but then I do!—"to see Jehovah's goodness in the land of the living!"

And now a lesson of experience fitly closes the *fifth* section of this psalm. It is a very brief and a very simple one; yet it is a lesson of perfection, declared in the Word to be that: for "let patience have her perfect work," and we shall be "*perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*" (Jas. i. 4.) What a glorious result of so simple a matter! "Wait on Jehovah!" wait, and not weakly and timidly, for the call to patience is no cause for fear: "be strong, and let thy heart take courage!" Such, thank God, is the wisdom derived from an "experience" that

Ps. xxviii.

[r]PSALM XXVIII.

The test of experience.

[A psalm] of David.

1 (1,2): A cry to Jehovah. (i.) Jehovah my rock!

UNTO thee I cry, Jehovah;
my [r]rock, be not silent to me!
lest, if thou be silent to me,
I be like those that go down to the [s]pit.

(ii.) hear the dependent one.

Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry unto thee;
when I lift up my hand unto thy holy [t]oracle.

2 (3, 4): Plea for the destruction of the wicked. (i.) not to be identified with them. (ii.) their contrasted portion.

[u]Draw me not away with the wicked, and with workers of vanity,
that speak [v]peace with their neighbors, while evil is in their heart.
Give them according to their works, and [w]according to the evil of their practisings:
give them according to the work of their hands,
render them their reward.

r Deut. 32.4. Ps. 18. 2. Is. 26. 4.
s *cf.* Ps. 88.4. Ps. 143. 7.
t *cf.* 1 Ki. 8. 33, 34.
u Ps. 26. 9. *cf.* 1 Sam. 25. 29. Ps. 141. 10.
v Ps. 55. 21. Ezek. 33. 31.
w Is. 3. 11. Matt. 25.41–46.

"worketh hope." (Rom. v. 4.) This harvest is assured to him that quietly will sleep and rise, and let it grow. Test it, prove it, whoever will! who is there that may not prove it for himself? there is none! Let the glad, sure hope cheer the darkest hours with its comfort:

"Wait—wait—on Jehovah."

Psalm XXVIII.

We have now in the fourth psalm of this series the ground of experience itself: "I trusted in Him and am helped"; a good argument in its place, and the necessary result of a life lived with God. How can we ignore all that has been gained in this way of practical acquaintance with Him? The richer we are in such experiences the brighter our lives will be, the more energetic, and the more fruitful. In the nature of things experience cannot be the first foundation; and it does not come in that place here.

1. The circumstances are still those of the last days, in which enemies and evil-doers surround the righteous. Jehovah is their one resource: if He interfere not, they will be like those going down to the pit. The psalmist cannot say that he will be *among* those going down to the pit, but *like* them. Yet the shadow of death is upon their souls: they fear it. The national deliverance looked for is, of course, not the other side of death,—not *out* of it, but *from* it. Death would, of course, end for the individual all hopes of this, though God will, in fact, for those who endure martyrdom, reserve a better place—a place with the heavenly saints of the first resurrection. (Rev. xx. 5, 6.) But this does not come into view here. The "pit," however, is for that reason more than the grave, though in the imagery of it. Confidence is based upon the Unchangeable God, and the dependence itself which the needy one has on Him. The prayer of Solomon for all those that pray towards the temple is remembered here, and made a ground of hope (1 Kings viii. 30). The mercy of the Lord is ever toward those that fear Him, and toward those that hope in His mercy, which He cannot deny; for He cannot deny Himself.

2. But the judgment of the world is come, and only by judgment can the deliverance of Israel be effected: so again we have the remnant's prayer for the destruction of the wicked. Evil has come to its height, and, in that which threatens because of it, it might well seem that none could at all escape, but that evil and just would alike be swallowed up in undistinguishing ruin. We can

3 (5): the full manifestation.

Because they [x]discern not the works of Jehovah,
nor the operations of his hands,
he shall [y]destroy them, and not build them up.

4 (6, 7): The experience. (i.) Unchangeable. (ii.) faith answered with deliverance.

Blessed be Jehovah!
for he hath [z]heard the voice of my supplications.
Jehovah, my [a]strength and my shield!
my heart [b]trusted in him, and I am helped;
and my heart exulteth;
and with my song I celebrate him.

5 (8, 9): The weak with the Strong. (i.) the way of strength. (ii.) Israel express their faith in the Deliverer.

Jehovah is their strength;
and a stronghold of salvation to his [c]Anointed he.
Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance!
even be their [d]shepherd, and bear them up forever!

x Is. 5. 12. Ps. 92. 5, 6.
y Is. 13. 9. 2 Thess. 1. 8-10.
z Ps. 116. 1.
a Ps. 18. 2.
b Ps. 16. 1.
c Ps. 20. 6, 9.
d Ps. 80. 1. Ps. 77. 20.

well understaud, therefore, the cry, "Draw me not away with the wicked!" with whom the smoothness of the outside only disguises the treachery of their hearts. Their works testify againust them; their reward, in contrast with the grace to the righteous, is prayed to be according to their works.

3. This is their character manward; but the fountain of all the evil is in their thorough iguorance of Jehovah. His works are before them; the operations of His hands are all around them: ignorance means only alienation from Him; moral incapacity to discern what is of Him is just the sign of the inveteracy of the evil, and which, because incurable, must be extirpated with the sharpest surgery in very mercy to mankind. The prayer changes therefore here to prophecy: he who does discern what God is, has the surest ground for anticipating the future of these stubborn sinners.

4. We have now the experience which works hope: along the way, before the end has come, Jehovah yet manifests Himself in signal interventions, which are the anticipation of the full deliverance to come. How blessed are the foretokens of the dawn, though it has not come. How good the help by the way, sent from Him who awaits us at the end of the way!

So here, Jehovah has heard and helped; Jehovah has shown Himself both strength and shield; prayer has been answered, and praise follows it.

5. But more: the heart is led on to realize the security of the abiding blessing, the necessary issue of what God is to His anointed. He upon whom, because of what He is, the Spirit rests in His fullness (Matt. iii. 16, 17) is the One who enlists all the power of God in His behalf, in the conflict between good and evil that must last as long as evil lasts upon the earth. "A stronghold of salvatiou to His Anointed He!" Thus to be under Him is to find deliverance assured. He is the "Captain of salvation," saving to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. Thus at the close of the psalm faith in the remnant, soon to be the nation, turns to Him, to put the burden of Israel's need upon His strong shoulder. It is a suited close to the series of psalms we have been considering; for the next psalm, though the final one, is in many respects different. Saviour and Shepherd they own Him now, themselves His people and His inheritance: for the *lost* sheep recovered, the place is upon His shoulder, according to the tender picture which He has Himself drawn. Once again it will be said, in view of this part of their history,—and they will be made to know it too, as never yet,—"He bare them and carried them all the days of old."

Psalm XXIX.

It will be noticed how all the psalms of this series have led one into another. The "integrity and uprightness" which "shall preserve me", at the end of the twenty-fifth, commences, and is the main theme of the twenty-sixth. This again, in its "Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house," gives us the theme

Ps. xxix.

[5]PSALM XXIX.

The judgment-storm with which God comes into the world, to give it the "expected end."

A psalm of David.

1 (1, 2): Jehovah above the mightiest. (i.) ascribe supremacy to Him. (ii.) as yourselves dependent on Him.

GIVE unto Jehovah, [e]sons of the mighty,
give unto Jehovah glory and strength.
Give unto Jehovah the [f]glory of his name:
worship Jehovah in the [g]beauty of holiness.

2 (3-9): The utterance of His voice. (i.) controlling the storm. (ii.) the growth of the storm. (iii.) its onset.

The [h]voice of Jehovah upon the waters!
the God of glory thundereth:
Jehovah upon the great [i]waters!
The voice of Jehovah is with [j]power;
the voice of Jehovah is with [k]majesty.
The voice of Jehovah [l]breaketh the cedars;
yea, Jehovah breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.

e Ps. 96. 7-9. Ps. 103. 20-22.
f *cf.* Rev. 4. 8-11. Rev. 5. 11-14.
g 1 Chr. 16. 29. 2 Chr. 20. 21.
h Ps. 18. 13. Job 37. 4, 5. *ctr.* 1 Ki. 19. 11-13.
i Ps. 93. 3, 4.
j *cf.* Ex. 20. 18, 19.
k *cf.* Hab. 3 3-16.
l Is. 2. 12, 13.

of the twenty-seventh. The twenty-seventh, with its experience of Jehovah's kindness and the closing moral of this, makes way for the twenty-eighth, in which the test of experience is the subject. The twenty-eighth prays for and prophesies the judgment of the wicked, and now the twenty-ninth shows us the passage of that clearing storm which, manifesting and leaving Jehovah supreme over the earth, leaves His people to peace, henceforth undisturbed forever.

This twenty-ninth psalm celebrates therefore the day of the Lord in its prostration of human strength and display of Jehovah's might, which after all are the central lessons for man to learn, when once He has learned what Jehovah Himself is. It is this with which the twenty-fifth psalm opens the series, the display of righteousness in grace, which known gives God His throne in the hearts of His redeemed people. Henceforth the process of sanctification is in the subjecting of the soul to Him,—the anticipation in faith of this day of the Lord in its inner meaning,—the result being perfect blessing and abiding peace: "Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me; and ye shall find rest to your souls." (Matt. xi. 28.)

The psalms following the twenty-fifth give us in order, first, the separation of the saint from sinners; secondly, that it is a separation to God; thirdly, to live a life of experimental realization of His presence in the circumstances and conditions of it. The final psalm here shows us the conditions of the realization itself, which is only to say, His governmental ways with us: simple enough if we know but a little who are these two who have come to walk together; God with all His grace forever God; and man His creature, only (and then how fully) capable of blessing so. This shows how suitably this psalm ends the present series; while its dispensational form brings it into relation with the prophetic character of the Psalms in general, which has been abundantly established in our study of them.

1. The psalm begins with the exhortation to the "sons of the mighty" to give Jehovah His place of supremacy over all. It is surely not an address to angels, as perhaps mostly held, but to the mighty of the earth, in view of what follows, —a message like that of Rev. xiv. 6, 7, the message of the "everlasting gospel," which proclaims the coming kingdom of God. They are to ascribe glory and strength to Jehovah as the only Source of these. They are to give Him the glory of His Name, the Ever-living, the Unchanging, abiding the same amid all creature changes; and to give Him allegiance in the only possible way in which He can accept it, adorned with the beauty of the holiness He requires.

2. Now Jehovah's voice is heard approaching, the sound of an impending storm, but no mere storm. Jehovah's voice is heard above the watery canopy of the expanse, controlling and directing the judgment in its path. It is the God

(iv.) prostration of creature-strength.
(v.) the flash of judgment.
(vi.) the limit of the storm.
(vii.) the end.

He maketh them also [m]skip like a calf:
Lebanon and Sirion like a young aurochs.
Jehovah's voice cleaveth the flames of fire.
The voice of Jehovah shaketh the wilderness:
Jehovah shaketh the [n]wilderness of Kadesh.
The voice of Jehovah maketh the [o]hinds to calve,
and strippeth the forests:
and in his [p]temple all of it speaketh of glory.

3 (10, 11): The revival.
(i.) the King.
(ii.) the ministry to a people brought into relation with Himself.

Jehovah sitteth at the flood:
yea, Jehovah [q]sitteth King forever.
Jehovah giveth [r]strength unto his people:
Jehovah blesseth his people with [s]peace.

m Ps. 114. 1-7. Ps. 68. 16.
n Nu. 13. 26.
o Job 39.1-3. *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 3.
p *cf.* Is. 6. 1-4. *cf.* Hab. 2. 20.
q Ps. 10. 16. Is.40. 22,23.
r Ps. 28. 7, 8.
s Ps. 72. 3, 7.

of glory who thundereth; and the waters gathering are indeed "great waters." We see it rise and spread: we hear the voice of "power" increasing to awful "majesty." Then the crash comes, and the cedars of Lebanon, the type of loftiness of creature stature, receive the force of the blow, and are shivered and broken down before it. So the prophet announces the on-coming "day of the Lord" (Isa. ii. 11–14): "The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low; and upon all the cedars of Lebanon that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan; and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up." This last the psalm goes on to now: "He maketh them also to skip like a calf: Lebanon and Sirion like a young aurochs." It is no hyperbolism, nor untruth to nature, nor are we to think of an earthquake, which would introduce another element from that with which we are occupied. The storm is not a common storm; and the hills themselves tremble and start like a frightened beast, before Jehovah. The governments of the earth seem to be represented here, as the trees represent the individual potentates: all that is most stable quakes. Amid all this comes the terrible forked flame,—the light, and God is light, but God manifest in judgment,—pure wrath upon the evil. The next verse shows the limit of the storm. Coming from the north of the land of Israel, from Lebanon and Hermon (Sirion), it sweeps to beyond the territory of Judah in the south, disappearing in the wilderness of Kadesh-barnea, the place in which the people had wandered so long after the exodus. Thus it covers the land in its breadth and length, while, of course, it does not follow that it is spent with this. This is, however, the limit of the prophet's observation;—for true prophet he is,—and the course of the storm is that of the invasion of Israel's foes in the last days,—an invasion with which the day of the Lord is identified in its early part (comp. Joel ii.). God uses the foe as His rod in a chastisement which works repentance; coming Himself then for their deliverance. It is the "great and terrible day of the Lord", but it ends in refreshment, revival, and eternal salvation.

The final verse here gives us the end in a twofold way. In the first place, the hind is made to calve: the new birth comes for the nation, hastened by that awful visitation which God uses to accomplish blessing. On the other hand, the forests are stripped, which is the judgment-work itself. This is the double aspect of the work of Him who is perfect in it all, and in whose temple—the place where He is seen and known—"all of it" (not, I think, the temple itself or those in it, which would not be in the line of the truth here; but) all His work itself proclaims His "glory." This is itself the perfect end of all.

3. But yet the psalm is not ended. He who delights not in judgment, but in blessing, is yet shown in two final verses in His mastery over the evil and in the abiding blessing that succeeds. The "flood" (*mabbul*) is here a word only

used in Scripture for that which destroyed the world in Noah's day. It does not follow that the direct application is to that; and yet the reference must not be slighted. Here is now a second Flood, of which that old flood was, in fact, a type. Another world has now come to an end, and a wholly new state of things follows. At this flood too Jehovah has sat enthroned; and Jehovah now sitteth (openly) as King forever. But He who is on the throne is still—oh, bless Him for it!—the patient Minister to His people's need. Still they *have* need: for the smooth path now as for the rough one hitherto, they need, and He "giveth strength," and "Jehovah blesseth His people with" unending "peace." Amen.

Series 2.

The second series is, like the former, of five psalms; which give us in various detail the salvation which is of God. Of course, it is that as realized by *Israel;* the Psalms never contemplating Christianity, or the blessing of a heavenly people. Their inheritance is in the land long assured them, and to which at last we are given to see their steps returning. The enemies who seek to keep them out of possession are, naturally therefore, human; although Satan's power works in and through them. The full deliverance is by the Lord from heaven, when His feet stand upon the mount of Olives, and "Jehovah my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee" (Zech. xiv. 4, 5). They are blessed *under* Christ, but not *with* Him; and these blessings, however great, fall short of that of the "Church, which is Christ's body," in a way corresponding to this.

Still their salvation is, of course, not merely temporal, but spiritual, and thus eternal. They are sinners saved by grace, needing as we the precious blood of Christ to cleanse them from sin and give them a righteous standing in the favor of God; although this in its security and complete blessedness the Psalms cannot free fully from the shadows cast upon it by the legal dispensation. Yet we are made to realize how much, after all, faith could enjoy, and how God could give assistance to faith, which would be realized in proportion to the simplicity of it. We shall find all through how much, even now, we are on common ground with the saints of old, and can enter even into their experiences; our own blessing being not defined by theirs on this account, but wonderfully greater. We must take care not to magnify this difference in such a way as to take from them what grace really made them to enjoy, or limit it to what may be argued from the legal nature of the dispensation simply, as if God had no secrets reserved for the ears of His people, which *He* had liberty to utter, or power to enable them to receive, even though the time were not come in which they could be openly made known.

The blessings of this salvation are, in these five psalms following, detailed as, first (psalm xxx.) in its being a salvation of God, having its roots in His own unchanging nature, and thus secure, whatever the circumstances may be. In the next psalm (xxxi.) it is seen as deliverance from the enemy; which for Israel, as already said, is the human foe and not the spiritual, though the spiritual foe be behind this. In the third psalm of this series (xxxii.) we have God as the sanctuary, the hiding-place of the soul, involving cleansing from sin and guidance for the way, personal and not merely providential. Fourthly (psalm xxxiii.), this God of redemption is the God of the whole world also, all circumstances shaping themselves at His bidding therefore: so that finally, in the thirty-fourth psalm, one can bless Jehovah at all times, and His praise be continually in the mouth. This last is a governmental psalm, and fittingly an alphabetic one, though not quite perfect: the *perfect* praise will be that around the Throne.

PSALM XXX.

For the title here we seem to have no explanation in the history of David; nor can we therefore decide from it whether "the house" be that of Jehovah or David's own. The Septuagint and many commentators accept the last of these applications as the true one; but the king himself does not appear in the psalm,

SERIES 2. (Psalms xxx.-xxxiv.)
The detailed Salvation.

Ps. xxx.

[1]PSALM XXX.

Whatever else changes, an unchanging God.

A psalm (a song of [t]dedication of the house) of David.

1 (1-3): God my sufficiency. (i.) whose power has intervened. (ii.) answer of my prayer. (iii.) the God of resurrection.

I WILL extol thee, Jehovah, for thou hast [u]lifted me up,
and hast not made my enemies [v]rejoice over me.
Jehovah, my God! I [w]cried unto thee, and thou hast [x]healed me.
Jehovah, thou hast [y]brought up my soul from Sheol:
thou hast quickened me from among [z]those going down to the pit.

2 (4, 5): The testimony (i.) of His consistency with Himself.

Sing psalms to Jehovah, ye [a]godly ones of his;
and give thanks at the [b]remembrance of his holiness.

[t] *cf.* 2 Sam. 5. 11. 2 Sa. 6. 17 with 2 Sa. 7. 1-13.
[u] Ps. 27. 6.
[v] Ps. 35. 19. Ps. 38. 16. Micah 7. 8.
[w] Ps. 28. 1, 2.
[x] Ex. 15. 23. Ps. 41. 4. *cf.* Is. 38. 1-5.
[y] Ps. 56. 13. Ps. 86. 13.
[z] Ps. 28. 1.
[a] Ps. 33. 1.
[b] Ps. 29. 2. Ps. 93. 5. Ps. 97. 12.

and the "glory" spoken of in the closing verse, as well as the general reference to Israel's last deliverance, speaks strongly for the former.

The psalm has twelve verses, and its normal structure would be therefore 4 x 3; but in fact, the second section loses one of its verses to the third, which is thus increased. The reason of this I cannot clearly give.

1. The psalmist begins with a song of praise to Jehovah for His effectual help. He had lifted him up, and had not allowed his foes to rejoice over him. Moreover it was the answer of God to his cry of distress when smitten, and death was before him; nay, when all seemed over with him. He was already numbered with those going down to the pit, and only the God of resurrection could have brought him up. This we can easily understand as applying to the deliverance of the remnant of the Jews: it exactly describes it. They are saved at the last moment of distress, when their enemies seem to have them in their grasp, and hope is gone. The whole language shows moreover that this condition of theirs is understood and acknowledged to be the effect of sin. The "pit," though it refers to death, is death in the anger of God; and this is plainly stated in the fifth verse. Thus this deliverance is a true salvation.

2. This thanksgiving to Jehovah is followed by testimony for Him; as it will indeed be in the day which is here anticipated. Delivered Israel will be His great witnesses upon the earth; and their deliverance abundant blessing to the Gentiles. But as Judah's deliverance precedes that of the ten tribes, who are afterwards joined to them, and is also out of more extreme distress, it is possible that the "godly ones" here addressed are these tribes of Israel. They are exhorted to sing psalms to Jehovah, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness. *Holiness* had to bring them low in order to raise them up; and they can now rejoice, and bid others rejoice, in that very dealing of God with them, so severe as it might seem, but so effectual, which had wrought in bringing them to repentance, and so to God. He had acted but in consistency with Himself; and this is always a necessity for blessing for any.

Now the cloud had passed, the wrath was gone; after all, it was but for a moment indeed, and in His favor following there had come, in the fullest sense, "life." This is stated here as a principle of widest application to all those who turn, in like manner, to Him. "Weeping may lodge with us at even-tide," and a night of darkness and distress succeed; but God's order is, first evening and then the morning; and for the morning is prepared, instead of sorrow, "a song of joy."

God works for eternity; man is the creature of time. Thus it is sure that man

(ii.) the contrast between His anger and His favor.

For his anger is, a [c]moment; in his favor is [d]life:
[e]weeping may lodge [with us] at eventide,
and for the [f]morning there be a song of joy.

3 (6–9): The heart of the matter.
(i.) self-sufficiency.

And I, in my [g]prosperity, had said, "I [h]never shall be moved:"

(ii.) the humiliation.

Jehovah, in [i]thy favor thou hadst made my mountain to stand strong:
thou [j]hiddest thy face; I was troubled.

(iii.) the recall to God.

I cried unto thee, Jehovah:
even unto Jehovah made I supplication.

(iv.) the plea of the failed: shall Thy praise fail?

What [k]profit is there in my blood,
if I go down to corruption?
will the [l]dust give thee thanks?
will it declare thy truth?

c Is. 26. 20. Is. 54. 7, 8.
d Ps. 63. 3. Ps. 27. 13.
e *cf.* Is.54.11.
f *cf.* Ps 126. *cf.* Is. 52. 1–10.
g Job 29. 18. *cf.* Is.39.1–7.
h *cf.* Matt. 26. 31–35.
i Ps. 119.117. *cf* I Pet.1.5.
j Ps. 27. 9. Ps. 104. 29. *ctr.*2 Cor.3. 18.
k *cf.* Is. 38. 9–20.
l Ps. 6. 5. Ps.88.10-12. *ctr.* Phil. 1. 21-23.

will misconceive Him as long as he clings to his own thoughts. Faith alone brings rest and deliverance; and brings it at once in proportion to its simplicity. Alas, how frequently is the soul even of the saint at issue with Him! and this is what of necessity brings darkness over it. When the conflict of will passes, the morning is at hand. Then we realize for what God works, that it is for His eternity; that night is but the womb of nature out of which the day is born, with its multitudinous voices and its golden fruits.

3. And now the heart of the subject is reached. It is perfectly simple, and yet how difficult to learn in full practical application, where it must be learned: "And I in my prosperity had said, I never shall be moved: Jehovah, in Thy favor Thou hadst made my mountain to stand strong." How hard it is to have a mountain standing strong, and not put our confidence in it! And if the heart refers this to the favor of God, all the more may it be a snare, a false confidence which comes in between it and immediate confidence in the Lord. And how hard it is to resign this (real or supposed) "favor," thus attached to what makes something of us! Privileges, circumstances, experiences, we cling to, only to find them fail us in the day of trial,—everything allowed to be shaken, that that which cannot be shaken may remain. When the eye is turned away to Christ, then in the joy of Him who bare our sins, brought up out of death, we can in a deeper way than Israel here say, "Thou hast brought my soul out of Sheol: Thou hast quickened me from among those going down to the pit." As sinners, in a work done for sinners, we find an immovable foundation, and can no more say, "Thou hidest Thy face," for that to the soul hid in Christ is gone through —He has endured it,—and God can no more hide His face from His Beloved, nor from those who in that Beloved find unchangeable acceptance.

In this psalm, no doubt, all this is not made plain, nor could yet be; nor can we attribute such knowledge to the Jewish remnant until, brought through their deep distress, they have looked upon Him whom they have pierced, their rejected and crucified Messiah. But the prophets prophesied with a knowledge far beyond their own, and we can find in them, as Peter assures us, more than they could understand; while yet there could for them also be thus furnished principles and truths upon which faith could stay itself, whatever the dispensation. Here it is to Jehovah, Jehovah the Unchangeable, Himself, that His people are turned, even by the very hiding of His face. What good in a mountain if that Face were hidden? In fact, it is gone: it cannot abide, if He abide not. But must not He abide who is Jehovah the Abiding? and has He not known, all through, the sin, the folly, the vanity, of the creature? Can it be pleasure to Him, or profit, or glory, to exact the just sentence of death from so frail a being? Will the dust—even though He has said, "Unto dust thou shalt return,"—really declare His truth? Will He be satisfied with the curse upon one who, be he what he may, clings to Him for blessing?

4 (10–12): The experience. (i.) a cry for grace. (ii.) the answering change. (iii.) glory to God!

Jehovah, hear and be gracious to me!
Jehovah, be my helper!
Thou hast [m] turned my mourning into dancing for me:
thou hast loosed my [n] sackcloth, and girded me with gladness:
To the end that [o] glory may psalm to thee, and not be silent:
Jehovah my God! I will give thee thanks [p] forever.

[m] ver. 5. Is. 61. 3.
[n] Is. 52. 1, 2. Jer. 32. 4, 10-14.
[o] *cf.* Is. 54.1.
[p] Ps.72.5,15.

Ps. xxxi.

[2] PSALM XXXI.

Deliverance from the enemy.

To the chief musician: a psalm of David.

1 (1–3): Jehovah the rock of faith. (i) in righteousness.

IN thee, Jehovah, have I taken [q] refuge:
let me never be ashamed; in thy [r] righteousness rescue me!

[q] *cf.* Ps.16.1. Ps. 28. 7. Ps. 71. 1.
[r] *cf* Ps. 17.1. Ps. 26. 1. Ps. 143. 1.

Here it is not the death of Christ that is pleaded, as we see, while yet it is the death of Christ which justifies, and how much more than justifies, the plea that the Spirit of God here puts into the heart of the suppliant. Can He desire man's death, who has given up His Son to death to redeem him? Yet God has found thus a way of making death itself a wonderful display, not of His truth simply, but of the love which is His Nature. He has got thus a ground upon which He can show and justify unchanging grace towards one who finds in his very sins his title to the Saviour of sinnners. Thus God manifests how safe the plea is, that rests upon what is in Himself. For Israel the end will fully show this; to us it is already fully shown. Would then that for every Christian, "my mountain" were no more the confidence, but Christ the unclouded confidence of the soul! that "Thou hiddest Thy face" were referred wholly to that one darkness which in its endurance has rent the veil of the sanctuary for us, and set God in the light for evermore!

4. Now comes at last the experience which shows that the plea is good. Faith is not to be made to conform to experience; for we cannot be trusted thus to read experience right, and God in Christ transcends all possible experience: but experience will at last surely approve faith; and so it is in this case. The cry for grace and help to Jehovah is answered at last by that which turns mourning into dancing, takes off the sackcloth garment, and girds the loins for glad activity in praise.

The expression, "that glory may psalm to Thee," is not to be reduced to the commonplace of most expositors: another psalmist has declared that "surely His salvation is nigh them that fear Him, that *glory* may dwell in our land" (Psalm lxxxv. 9). This is the display of God Himself in the midst of Israel, in the very time to which we have now reached. This will bear blessed witness to what He is, waking up all nature in accompaniment of praise. This is what glory *psalming* to Him may well mean. The whole land—the whole *earth* in measure—responds in harmony, as an instrument to the skilled fingers of the player. Alas, it has found none hitherto to bring out its dormant capacities. Now it awakes, to be silent no more.

We can understand then how this psalm is "for the dedication of the house," —the sanctuary which the end of Daniel's seventy weeks will see anointed to Jehovah. The end of salvation is that God and man may be at last together.

PSALM XXXI.

We have now what is in itself very simple, but which on that account may seem to have less instruction for us, with whom circumstances are so different, and whose attitude towards those who persecute them is to be so different. For Israel at the time of the end a psalm like this has, of course, the deepest impor-

(ii.) for deliverance.

Bow thine ear down to me! [s]speedily deliver me!
be to me a rock of strength; a house of defence to save me!

(iii.) for His name.

For my [t]rock and my fortress thou art;
and for thy [u]name's sake lead me and guide me!

2 (4–6): Dependent relationship.

Draw me out of the [v]net they have privily laid for me:
for thou art my stronghold.

(i.) to God as strength

Into thy hand I [w]commit my spirit:

(ii.) by redemption.

thou hast [x]redeemed me, Jehovah, God* of truth.

(iii.) by character.

I have [y]hated them that observe lying vanities:
and *I* have trusted in Jehovah.

3 (7, 8.) Realization.

I will be glad and [z]rejoice in thy mercy:

(i.) God knowing

for thou hast seen my trouble; thou hast [a]known my soul in straits.

(ii.) and delivering.

And thou hast not shut me up in the enemy's hand:
thou hast set my feet in a [b]large place.

4 (9–13): The trial.

Be [c]gracious to me, Jehovah; for I am in strait:

(i.) a cry for grace.

mine eye is [d]shrunk with vexation,—my soul and my belly.

(ii.) wasting away!

For my life is spent with [e]grief, and my years with sighing:
my strength faileth because of [f]mine iniquity, and my bones are shrunk.

s *cf.* Ps. 40. 13, 17.
t Ps. 18. 2.
u Ps. 25. 11, 12. Ps. 23. 3.
v Ps. 25. 15. Ps. 141. 8–10.
w *cf.* Lk. 23. 46. Acts 7. 59.
x Ps. 26. 11. Ps. 71. 23.
y Ps. 26. 5. Ps. 139. 21, 22.
z Ps. 9. 2.
a *cf.* Ex. 3. 7. *cf.* Heb. 4. 15.
b Ps. 18. 19. Ps. 118. 5.
c Ps. 56. 1. Ps. 57. 1.
d Job 17. 7. Ps. 6. 7. Lam. 5. 17.
e Ps. 38. 8.
f Ps. 25. 11. Ps. 38. 4. *cf.* Ps. 40. 12.

* El, "Mighty."

tance. For ourselves spiritual enemies may be imaged in these human ones, and no doubt are: the conflict between good and evil is, in its principles, the same, whatever the part of the field in which we may be engaged.

1. Certain basis-truths are constantly repeated in these psalms; and, simple as they are, the repetition must be as wholesome as it is inevitable. That Jehovah—God in His unchangeable self-consistency—is the rock of faith, needs not, of course, to be proved, nor is it. It is used with God Himself as a prevailing argument for Him to show Himself in that character. Must He not be to the soul that trusts Him all that it counts upon Him for? The suppliant can plead His righteousness even in his own behalf; for does He not encourage faith to lay hold upon Him? "Be to me" therefore, he cries, "a rock of strength, a house of defence, to save me: for my rock and my fortress Thou art." And would He not be known for what He is? that is, act for His Name's sake,—lead and guide His people in conformity with this?

2. Relationship to God is one of dependence necessarily on the side of His creature: it is the relation of the weak to the strong, of the foolish and short-sighted to the Infinitely Wise, of those prone to sin to the Ever-Holy. It implies that He is to be their resource and help, even against themselves, and against every form of real evil. Thus the psalmist commits himself into Jehovah's hand, as his mighty and faithful Redeemer; his heart cleaving to Him in opposition to every false confidence and senseless superstition of man.

3. Now he realizes Jehovah's mercy. He has seen his trouble, known his soul in straits. How comforting to know that; though deliverance yet there is not! What comfort is there in the presence of one who loves us, even though powerless to bring us other help! But the psalmist can say more than that. He is not shut up in the enemy's hand; his feet are set in freedom, in a large place.

4. After the manner of the Psalms, and indeed according to numerical symbol-

(iii.) an open reproach.

I am become a [g]reproach because of all my oppressors,
even exceedingly to my neighbors, and a dread to mine acquaintance:
they that see me without flee from me.

(iv.) gone utterly.

I am [h]forgotten, as a dead man out of the heart:
I am become like a broken vessel.

(v.) "terror on every side."

For I have heard the murmur of many—terror on every side—
while they took [i]counsel together against me,—
plotted to take away my life.

5 (14–18): In Thy hand.

But as for me, I have [j]trusted in thee, Jehovah:
I have said, Thou art my God.

(i.) God of my choice

My [k]times are in thy hand:

(ii.) deliver me!

deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and my persecutors!

(iii.) make Thy face to shine!

Make thy [l]face to shine upon thy servant:
save me for thy mercies' sake!

(iv.) make not my hope ashamed.

Jehovah, let me not be [m]ashamed, for I have called upon thee:
the [n]wicked shall be ashamed;
they shall be silent in Sheol!

(v.) reward the lying lips.

Be dumb the [o]lying lips,
which insolently speak against the righteous with pride and contempt!

6 (19–24): The victory.

How great is thy [p]goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee,

(i.) The faithfulness of God.

[which] thou hast wrought for those taking [q]refuge in thee
before the sons of men!

g Ps. 39. 8. Ps. 44. 13. Ps. 38. 11. *cf.* De. 28. 37.
h Ps. 88. 4,5. *cf.* Ru.1.19.
i Jer. 18. 23. *cf.* Matt. 27. 1.
j ver. 1. Ps. 7. 1.
k *cf.* Deut. 33. 25.
l Num. 6. 25, 26. Ps. 67. 1. Ps. 80. 3, 7, 19. Ps. 119.135.
m ver. 1. Ps. 25. 2, 3.
n Ps. 35. 4, 26. Ps. 40. 14.
o Ps. 4. 2. Ps. 12. 2–4.
p *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 9, 10. 1 Sam. 2. 5–8. *cf.* Phil. 4. 19.
q Ps. 46. 1. Ps. 142. 5.

ism, to which the Psalms, as well as all other scriptures, are conformed, the trial comes after the deliverance, or at least the anticipation of this by faith. The whole trouble is spread out before God, with every circumstance of sorrow and distress. The speaker is in strait; his eye shrunk with vexation, yea, his soul and inmost parts; his life is spent with grief, and his years with sighing; his strength fails, the solid bones themselves are shrunken. Nor is this even private misery: all around, his neighbors and acquaintances, realize his condition beset with eager enemies, and avoid him as not willing to share his lot. Even more, like a dead man, or a broken vessel cast upon the refuse-heap, he has dropped out of the memory,—worse, out of the hearts that once held him in affection. And even yet this desolate and cast-off life men cannot leave alone, but have conspired to take it: the extremes and opposites of sorrow meet and are reconciled in the forms of "terror round about."

5. But out of it all he turns to God again. The waves but fling him higher on the rock. "But as for me, I have trusted in Thee, Jehovah: I have said, Thou art my God! My times are in Thy hand." Oh what a song the wind's wild music makes, when that can be said really from the heart! And though the prayer still goes on, "deliver me from the hand of mine enemies," yet the perplexity is gone. "Make Thy face to shine," he says; but its rays are already lighting up his heart when he says so. Then he sees the pillar-glory turn its terror upon his enemies: "the wicked shall be ashamed; they shall be silent in Sheol." And he puts his consenting Amen into a prayer: "Be dumb the lying lips, which proudly and contemptuously speak against the righteous!"

(ii.) in preserving.
Thou [r]hidest them in the secret of thy presence from the conspiracies of men:
thou concealest them in a pavilion from the [s]strife of tongues.

(iii.) fenced around.
Blessed be Jehovah:
for he has shown me wondrously his mercy in a [t]fenced city.

(iv.) the experience.
As for me, I said in my alarm, I am [u]cut off from before thine eyes:
nevertheless thou hast heard the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.

(v.) recompense.
Oh, [v]love Jehovah, all ye godly ones of his!
Jehovah preserveth the faithful;
and plentifully [w]recompenseth the proud doer.

(vi.) the spirit of victory.
Be strong, and let your hearts take [x]courage,
all ye that hope in Jehovah!

r Ps. 27. 5. Ps. 9. 9. Ps. 32. 7.
s Job 5. 21. Ps. 55.6-11.
t *cf.* Is. 26.1.
u *cf.* Ps. 3.2. Is. 38.10,11.
v Ps. 69. 36. Ps. 97. 10. Ps. 34. 9.
w Ps. 28. 14.
x Ps. 27. 4.

6. The whole ends with a song of victory. The goodness of God was but "laid up" for those that fear Him, when as yet experience there was none; and, though in unseen Arms, His refugees too are laid up,—hidden from conspiracies and the whole strife of tongues; fenced round as in a fortressed city. Alas, there had been alarm, and unbelief had misconstrued God's silence; yet He had heard, all through: and the unburdened heart breaks out in earnest exhortation, bred of this experience. "Oh love Jehovah, all ye godly ones of His! Jehovah preserveth the faithful, and plentifully recompenseth the proud doer." Thus may the hearts of His own be animated with the courage of assured victory: "Be strong, and let your hearts take courage: all ye that hope in Jehovah."

Psalm XXXII.

The psalm to which we now come is a bright testimony to the terms upon which, even under the shadow of the legal covenant, the souls of His true people were with God. It is striking also as the first of the Maskil psalms, of which there are thirteen altogether, a title which means, according to the margin of our common Bibles, "giving instruction." The Revised Version omits this, and the meaning is disputed.* Delitzsch objects that "there are only two (xxxii. and lxxviii.) which can be regarded as didactic poems;" but it is not necessary, as we shall see, that they should be, in any formal way, didactic. There are many lessons to be learned apart from the professional schoolmaster.

It is, I have no doubt, to prophecy, and to prophecy of the times we are considering so often in the Psalms, the prophecy of the days of Israel's final tribulation which God uses to bring her to Himself, that we must look for light as to the proper significance of the title. From the prophet Daniel, to whom the Lord refers in His own picture of the times preceding His coming (Matt. xxiv. 15, 21), we learn much of this time (comp. ch. xii. 1); and he speaks of "those that *understand*"—the same word, *maskilim*—"among the people" (xi. 33, 35), who "shall instruct many," the "wise" (margin, "teachers")—still the same word—who "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament," and who, according to the parallelism, and what is said of them before, are the same "that turn many to righteousness" (xii. 3). Of these it is further said (ver. 10), that while "none of the wicked shall understand," "the *wise* shall understand." The word *maskilim* means either "those who understand" or who "make (others) to understand"; and thus we realize the connection between the way it occurs in Daniel and in the titles of the psalms.

* "The meaning is questioned, but the old interpretation, which connects it with the word *askil*, which occurs ver. 8, 'I will instruct thee,' is probably correct. A didactic song, intended for instruction; thus the lxx., σύνεσεως; Jerome, 'eruditio.'" (Speaker's Commentary.)

Thus we see — what, indeed, is simple enough in itself, when we realize the mercy of God to His people — that, in the midst of the darkness and confusion of the terrible troubles of which we are speaking, God raises up helpers for them, men gifted with special wisdom for the times, realizing what the word of prophecy predicts, and seeking to turn the people to their God. They must get for themselves the instruction they impart to others, and (however God may come in to give direct oracular testimony) this, one would say, according to His regular methods of dealing with His people, through His precious — to those in such straits, how precious—Word.

Now, apart from the direct prophecy such as we find in Daniel, *where* should we expect such help to be provided, rather than in these very psalms? And why should not these *Maskil* psalms be marked thus as special instruction for these *Maskil men* so linked together by the inspired word for each,— whether instruction for themselves, or for others through them?

If we take up the Lord's prophecy of this very period already referred to (Matt. xxiv.) we find clearly directions given by Him, which, of course, are to be recognized and acted on by the remnant of those days: "when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (*whoso readeth, let him understand*), then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains." Notice the special, Daniel-like, reference,— nay, the appeal to be "men of understanding," *maskilim*,— certain to arouse the attention of those exercised in that time of trial, and acquainted with Daniel.

This involves, of course, the recognition of Christ, and the use of the New Testament among the Jews of that day; and this is most natural, and what, one would say, would be certainly the case. How could the taking away of the multitudes of Christians to be with their Lord have transpired,* and they be ignorant altogether of Him and the Christian Revelation? And yet the light they have may be very partial and uncertain; and we have full reason to expect this. With all God's word open to us to-day,— open for nearly two millennia,— and with the gift of the Spirit bestowed upon us in a manner and with a measure they will not have,— how contradictory are the thoughts of Christians, even on well-nigh fundamental points, in spite of this! In the day we speak of, those whose case we are considering will be permitted to go through thorough exercise of heart as to all the questions of the past, and learn of Him who meets their need as the need itself is realized. Amid all this individual exercise of heart so necessary for them we may be able to give little account to ourselves of their progress in divine truth—different, as it will naturally be, in different persons— until they look upon Him whom they have pierced, and one repentant wave of sorrow prostrates the whole people before God.

But when we turn to the book of Revelation, which† from ch. 6–19 occupies itself with the same scenes as those in Daniel and in the prophecy of the Lord, we find another significant connection with Daniel, and another sign of the use of the New Testament by these Jewish saints. The picture of the "beast" in Rev. xiii. must inevitably attract the students of Daniel's prophecy, and there, at the close of the chapter, they will find this special note for the *maskilim:* "Here is the mind which has wisdom: *let him that hath understanding* count the number of the beast." No plainer address could there be to those specially marked out in this way by the Old Testament prophet; no inquiry more significant for such as to the signs of the times, than this as to the great enemy and

* See pp. 13, 22, 23, and Notes in the beginning of Ruth. For fuller and more orderly detail, consult the prophetic writings of J. N. Darby, W. Trotter, W. Kelly, T. B. Baines, and others.

† In chapters I.-III. we have the Lord's judgment of the churches, the present Christian state; toward the close of which His coming is announced with more and more urgency. In the beginning of the fourth chapter the apostle is caught up to heaven, as the saints will be, and there sees the crowned elders before the Throne, and hears them sing the song of redemption (ch. v.). The Lamb is now the Lion of Judah (King of the Jews), and with chapter vi. the judgments of the day of the Lord begin on earth. (See Kelly, Baines, and the so often referred to "Synopsis of the Books of the Bible," by J. N. Darby.)

Ps. xxxii.

1 (1, 2): The blessedness of righteousness imputed.

(i.) grace.

(ii.) its ministry.

[3]PSALM XXXII.

The soul cleansed and God its sanctuary.

[A psalm] of David, [y]Maskil.

[x]HAPPY is he* whose [a]revolt is [b]forgiven,
whose sin is [c]covered!
Happy the man to whom Jehovah [d]imputeth not perversity;
and in whose spirit there is no [e]guile!

* A mere change of the vowel points would make this plural, as in the apostle's quotation, Rom. iv. 7.

y Ps. 42. title, etc.
z Ps. 1. 1. Ps. 41. 1.
a Is. 1. 2. Jer. 2. 8,29. Hos. 7. 13.
b Rom. 4. 6-8. Ps. 85. 1, 2. *cf.* Eph. 1. 7.
c *cf.* Zech. 3. 4. *cf.* Is. 40. 2.
d *cf.* Acts 7. 60 with Rom. 4. 22-25.
e *cf.* Lk. 18. 13, 14; *cf.* Acts 15. 9; 1 Pet. 2. 1.

oppressor of the people. Hence the reference is too plain to need any further insistence on it.

All this surely, then, prepares us to understand the *maskil* psalms; and when we take up these individually, we shall find the view that they contain special "instruction" for the last days abundantly sustained. Thus the present psalm is, as such, of the most vital importance, speaking of God's way of forgiveness and a hiding-place with Him, before the forty-second, the second of these, gives the comfort of those cast away from the earthly sanctuary. Next, the forty-fifth celebrates Messiah and His victory, and Israel's blessing under Him. Then a series of four (lii.–lv.) describe the wicked one and his followers; the seventy-fourth pleads for the violated sanctuary itself; the seventy-eighth recounts the cause of it, the many wanderings of the people from their God; the seventy-ninth mourns again over the desolatiou of Jerusalem; the eighty-eighth expresses the terror of the broken law; the eighty-ninth reveals "the sure mercies of David;" while the 142d closes the list with the thankful acknowledgment that when other refuge failed and none cared for their souls, Jehovah Himself had known and cared.

Thus, though we may not be able to recognize the distinctive value of each psalm in this way, as a whole they certainly give us what is needed wisdom for the day of Israel's trial. The other psalms link readily with these, for complete "instruction."

The eleven verses of the psalm divide into five parts, in which we learn how God can be with man; not, however, atonement, which we have had before, but the consequences of it. Of these fifteen remnant psalms which come together in the three series, it is the middle one, and the hinge upon which all turns.

1. It is the doctrine of "righteousness without works" that David, as the apostle says (Rom. iv. 6), here declares. There is no such text as "happy is the man that keepeth the law," because such a man cannot be found, and the law cannot be satisfied with fragmentary obedience. On the contrary, it proclaims, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." (Gal. iii. 10.) Nor is this altered when it is given the second time; for the returning sinner, though met with forgiveness, must still "do that which is lawful and right" to "save his soul alive." (Ezek. xviii. 27.) Thus faith it is that establishes the law (Rom. iii. 31), when it owns the impossibility of being righteous by it, and flees for refuge to the hope set before men in the gospel.

And after all the happiness of the sinner saved by grace is far beyond that that could have been known by any one standing in his own righteousness, though this were stainless and flawless in its perfection. For if, in the one, man were exalted and honored, in the other all the heart of God has been poured out upon him. Christ's work it is that has opened heaven to us, and given us blessedness beyond possibility of creature claim. How much is lost by speculations as to the future of an unfallen Adam, going quite beyond the record, and to the constant belittling of the "fifth part more" of the trespass-offering, the exceeding glory of Christ and of His blessed work!

2 (3-5) Conflict and deliverance.
(i.) barren conviction.
(ii.) conflict.
(iii.) the sin exposed.

While I kept [f]silence, my bones wasted,
because of my roaring all the day.
For day and night thy [g]hand was heavy on me:
my sap was turned into a summer drought. Selah.
I [h]acknowledged my sin unto thee,
and my perversity have I [i]not covered:
I [j]said, I will confess my revolting* to Jehovah:
and *thou* [k]forgavest the perversity of my sin. Selah.

[f] Prov. 28. 13. *cf.* Job 27. 5, 6. *cf.* Job 13. 15. *cf.* Lk. 18. 18-23.
[g] Ps. 38. 1-6. Ps.39.10,11.
[h] 2 Sa.12.13. 2 Sa. 24. 10. 1 John 1. 8-10.
[i] *cf.* ver. 1. *cf.* John 4. 16-18, 29.

* A plural in the original; but I take it that "my revolting" has the force of a plural.

Jno. 8. 1-11. [j] Lk. 15. 17-19; *cf.* Is. 65. 24 with Lk. 17. 14. [k] Lk. 15. 20-22; Ps. 85. 2; Ps. 130. 4; Lk. 7. 40-50; Mi. 7. 18.

Happy then, indeed, is he whose revolt* is forgiven, whose sin is covered! First, we have that which God's heart would feel first, and which sin is, in its essence, a "revolt" from Him. It is this, therefore, which specially needs, and is met with, forgiveness; then the outcome, the full sad issue of it all, is "covered,"—put out of sight. We know how God has provided for this in that precious "blood that maketh atonement for"—covereth—"the soul." But the word used here is not the same as this, for our attention here is fixed, not upon *what* covers, but upon the fact itself, what leads to it, and what follows from it. The *heart* is appealed to in the forgiveness; the shame and occasion for charge are removed by the covering. Happy then, again, the man to whom Jehovah imputeth not iniquity,—or "perversity," as the word literally is, and surely in direct connection with what follows, that in his spirit there is now no longer "guile," which *is* perversity. The latter is the effect of the former: the non-imputation is the moral remedy; grace is that which sets the soul right, enabling it for the honest judgment of sin, and winning it to God, so as to divorce it from this. Such is the power of the gospel! Such is its sweet ministry of salvation, certified in the experience of the saved soul.

2. But the psalmist is not satisfied with declaring the blessedness of grace: he goes on to tell us how he attained this blessedness,—just *where* grace met him and conquered him, after stubborn resistance to it. He tells us of the conviction that pressed on him to confession, and he would not confess. He kept silence, yet with the deep in his soul roaring for the tumult, till the very bones, the most solid parts of the body, wasted under the strife. It was with God, too, as he knew; God's hand lay heavy upon him, and his sap was dried up as by a drought in summer. Truth in the inward parts was wrought at last: "I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and my perversity have I not covered: I said, I will confess my revolting to Jehovah: and *Thou* forgavest the perversity of my sin." How the promptness of this mercy reminds us of the Lord's illustration of His Father's love to the returning prodigal! Not even, "I *did* confess, and Thou forgavest," but the forgiveness anticipating the confession itself. Just as when he who, far off indeed from his father, turned in his need to him with words prepared, seeking but a servant's place,—to find his father's kiss anticipating in like manner the confession, and forbidding the thought of that which denied him a father's heart.

3. Thus the sanctuary is found: for God, as we know, will give full way to His grace, and justify it against all cavils of those who will dispute it. What another reminiscence is it of the Lord's parable, "Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance"! Wherever we find God really, be it in the Old Testament or the New, we find Him the same. And so here at once is it declared that this is no exceptional mercy to a David, but a way common to all the

* In the common and revised versions "transgression." The Septuagint has (in the plural) ἀνομίαι, "lawlessness." There is no necessary implication of transgression of the *law:* it is rather the root from which all sin springs,—what sin is, therefore, in its essence, as in 1 John iii. 4 (R. V.), "sin is lawlessness."

3 (6, 7): The sanctuary:
(i.) one for all, and one only.
(ii.) its security.
4 (8, 9): For the way.
(i.) divine light, and personal guidance.

For this shall [l]every godly one pray unto thee,
in a time when thou [m]mayest be found:
surely in the [n]flood of many waters they shall not reach unto him.
Thou art my [o]hiding-place:
thou shalt [p]preserve me from strait:
thou shalt compass me about with [q]songs of deliverance. Selah.

I will [r]instruct thee and teach thee in the way thou goest:
I will counsel [thee, with] mine [s]eye upon thee.

l *cf.* Ps. 16. 3 with Matt. 3. 5, 6. 1 Tim. 1. 15, 16.
m Is. 55. 6. Matt. 25. 11, 12. Jno. 7. 34. Hos. 5. 6.
n Ps. 27. 5, 6. Matt. 7. 24, 25.
o Ps. 31. 20. Is. 32. 2. *ctr.* Gen. 3. 8–10.
p Is. 25. 4. Ps. 59. 16.
Jer. 30. 7–9. *q* Ex. 15. 1, etc.; Zeph. 3. 17; Lk. 15. 23, 24. *r* Ps. 25. 4, 5, 8, 12; Ps. 86. 11; Is. 2. 3. *s* Ps. 11. 4; Prov. 15. 3; *cf.* Lk. 22. 61, 62.

"godly," who by grace alone are won and rendered such. "For this shall every godly one pray unto Thee in a time when Thou mayest be found." A time may come, it is implied, when He may *not* be found; and thus "the floods of many waters" which we are now warned of remind us of the ark and of those alone saved when the Lord shut them in. To these no flood could reach; while no others could escape them. Between those inside and the flood, by this that Jehovah had done for them, there stood pledged for their security all the power of Jehovah's arm, all the glory of Jehovah's Name. Thus He was really their hiding-place. Could any flood of waters break through such a barrier? And now that we know Christ as the Antitype of this ark, the glorious Refuge upon whom the storms beat and the floods raged, but who has borne His full freight of blessing safely to the shore,—the soul in Christ can triumphantly say this. In Christ, as Christ: living because He lives; accepted in His acceptance; privileged to turn away even from ourselves, to rejoice in His perfection and delight ourselves in unchanging love. Here all that God is is indeed pledged to us, and with what songs of deliverance are not they encompassed, whom the Ark of their salvation has thus already brought to shore!

But still there comes a flood of waters for the earth, a day of tribulation such as never was,—a day of doom for the rebellious, such as these Psalms continually warn us of, when (the saints of the present already safely sheltered with their Lord above) it will be said to Israel: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." And the rescued nation will sing, after the manner of this thirty-second psalm, of the Lord their hiding-place: "For Thou hast been a stronghold to the poor, a stronghold to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall." (Isa. xxvi., 20; xxv. 4.) Whatever the day of need may be, there is one way of blessing only,—One only in whom refuge is ever found.

4. According to the constant order in Scripture, which is the moral order also, after the lesson of the sanctuary comes the lesson for the way. "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way thou goest: I will counsel thee with mine eye upon thee." The last part of the verse is variously rendered and understood by commentators; and even as to the former part, according to Moll, "almost all recent interpreters, with Calvin and Geier, regard these verses as the words of David, which point all sinners to the God who has pardoned him." But this reduces "mine eye upon thee" to a mean and paltry pleonasm. *David's* eye upon the person he is instructing is of very small account; God's, of immense significance. Here, too, the numerical structure gives decisive help in favor of the fuller meaning. Even when God is rightly taken as the instructor, all commentators breaking the last part into two—"I will counsel thee; mine eye shall be upon thee"—while unnaturally affecting the structure of the verse, impoverishes the meaning; while the fuller is also the simpler rendering of the words. How blessed,

(ii.) not restraint.

Be not as the [t]horse [or] mule, which have no understanding;
whose trappings must be [u]bit and bridle for restraint,
[or] it will not come near thee.

5 (10, 11): Governmental ways.

(i.) their congruity.

Many [v]sorrows shall be to the wicked;
but he that [w]trusteth in Jehovah, mercy shall compass him about.

(ii.) the moral.

Be [x]glad in Jehovah, and exult, ye righteous:
and shout for joy, all ye [y]upright in heart.

[t] Prov. 26. 3. James 3. 3. *cf.* Nu. 22. 22-35 with 2 Pet. 2. 16.
[u] *cf.* Jonah 1. 4-10. Jon. 4. 4-11.
[v] Prov. 13. 15. Prov. 1. 24-32.
[w] Ps. 7. 1, etc.
[x] Ps. 33. 1.
[y] Ps. 26. 1, etc.

as well as inevitable, is it, that He in whom the soul has found its rest and shelter, must now concern Himself with all its future course. He to whom it is come is now its Lord, but also its most tender Counsellor. It is to act in freedom, but yet in subjection,—two things which go most perfectly together. God's eye is upon the blest and happy object of His favor; and this implies His perfect interest, true; but if the last clause reads, as naturally it should, as a connected whole, this Eye that occupies itself continually with us—with all that concerns us—becomes at the same time a positive guidance for us, which sheds light upon all the intimacy and responsibility of the new relationship. It implies not only on His side the interest of love, which is holy and purposeful; but, on ours, nearness to Him, intelligence of His mind, and prompt responsive activity: things which are full of comfort for us, and as full of earnest admonition.

His interest is the first thing to consider: "He never withdraweth His eyes from the righteous." And this even a Job might find, in the time of his strait, a sore trial rather than a gain: "What is man," he cries in his anguish, "that Thou shouldst magnify him? and that Thou shouldst set Thy heart upon him? and that Thou shouldst visit him every morning, and try him every moment? How long wilt Thou not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle?" (Job vii. 17–19.) But Job, with all his outward perfection, had not yet seen God as he was to see Him; and the whole process by which we are won to delight in His constant occupation with us, the 139th psalm will by and by reveal. How blessed, then, when we have seen Him indeed, to know that every step we take in the way is a matter of concern to Him!—that there is not an hour of the day but He has some thought as to how we should spend it!

This is not legality, though it is true we may turn it into this. But he who knows best the folly and misery of his own ways will be most profoundly thankful for the love that has shown itself in this constant care, for a wisdom of which we are free ever to avail ourselves, and which is as perfect and far-seeing as the heart can crave to know.

In the wilderness "there is no way," except as it is marked out for us by the Living Guide Himself. Our path, therefore, must not be merely one of "righteousness," but one of "faith," all through. (2 Tim. ii. 22.) We can see, therefore, how unceasing prayer must be with us, and how God would nurture in us a constant dependence, most helpful to our whole development in the new life that is ours. That "we had turned every one to his own way" is the scripture account of sin. (Isa. liii. 6.) Alas, naturally we prize this, and count it freedom; but that "in Him we live and move and have our being" is the necessary creature condition, violated by every act of independency, and conformity to which is rest and blessedness.

But this dependency must be free and intelligent, as well as in the intimacy to which He has called us with Himself; and all this is implied in guidance with the eye. Nearness: for the glance of the eye is not intended for those far off, and cannot be read by them. Intelligence: for such guidance supposes that already we have a knowledge of His mind, or we shall not be able to interpret a look. With all this, a constant promptness of attention, as of those waiting to anticipate His will, or we shall not be ready for, or catch it. All this is plain:

Ps. xxxiii.
1 (1-3): Jehovah.
(i.) praise comely for the upright.
(ii.) the accompaniment.
(iii.) a resurrection-song.

[4]PSALM XXXIII.

This God the God of the whole earth.

SHOUT for [z]joy in Jehovah, ye righteous!
for the upright [a]comely is praise.
Praise Jehovah with the [b]harp!
psalm to him with the [c]ten-stringed lyre!
Sing unto him a [d]new song!
play skillfully with loud sound!

z Ps. 32. 11.
a Ps. 147. 1. Ps. 92. 1.
b 1 Sam. 16. 16. Ps. 43. 4. Rev. 5. 8.
c Ps. 92. 3. Ps. 144. 9.
d Ps. 96. 1. Ps. 98. 1. Ps. 149. 1. Is. 42. 10. *cf.* Rev. 5. 9.

but how it speaks of our need of acquaintance with Scripture, that we may be "filled with the knowledge of His will"; and of our greater need even of a devotedness which shall make God the real object of our life continually, and fill it with and sanctify it wholly to Himself.

And this gives force to the exhortation following, in which is contrasted the unintelligent intractability of horse or mule who need the restraint of bit and bridle, or you cannot make them approach or yield themselves to your guidance. And how many of the people of God have lives as little yielded up to Him, who must be governed by circumstances, rather than by the eye of God. His desire for us is not the drudgery of a stopped will, but the freedom of a changed one.

5. The next verse speaks plainly of God's governmental dealings with the wicked and the man of faith; which put a song of praise into the mouth of the righteous, exultation and a shout of joy into that of the upright in heart.

PSALM XXXIII.

The psalm following shows us now that Jehovah, the God of redemption, is the God of the whole earth. If this God, then, be for us, all else must be; and this opens the way to the closing praise of the thirty-fourth: "I will bless Jehovah at all times." The theme here, in what is the fourth psalm in the series, anticipates what is more fully brought out in the fourth book, where also Jehovah and the Second Man are shown as One; and thus the security of the earth in blessing is gloriously assured.

1. The psalmist begins with an exhortation to praise Jehovah, the one theme of praise for the righteous. The first verses here are but the expansion of the closing verse of the previous psalm, where we have found that the righteous are such only by redemption. And Jehovah is the name of God as the Redeemer,— the special name under which He takes up the people in the book of Exodus (see Ex. iii., notes); and thus the covenant Name of blessing for the redeemed. It is true that with Israel the legal spirit which inheres in man, and which had to be yielded to in the covenant of bondage at the mount of law, prevailed to obscure for them the glory of this Name, and still obscures it; yet in it, though veiled, their blessings are nevertheless wrapped up, and will be found in the day that is at hand.

Jehovah is the living and unchanging God, acting from Himself necessarily as independent of all else, finding in Himself the sufficient argument for what He does. Thus no consideration of man has to come in, to hinder the fullest blessing for him. If man came in, it would be only to hinder God acting from Himself, for the glory of His Name, His purpose stands.

Thus the exhortation may well be now, "Shout for joy in Jehovah, ye righteous! Praise is comely for the upright";— for those delivered from guile by the grace that has wrought conviction of sin, and met with salvation the convicted sinner.

This praise, as will be fully the case when Israel becomes the giver of it, will find its response in all creation round. This is what the harp and lyre in Israel's hands declare, who, as the earthly people, will awaken this response. If we knew better what these instruments were,— which is disputed,— we should be able to realize, no doubt, distinctive meaning in them. All that we can say now

2 (4-9): The testimony of His word and work.
(i.) right and faithful.
(ii.) bounteous.
(iii.) Maker of the heavens.
(iv.) the sea.
(v.) man with God.
(vi.) successful might.

For right is Jehovah's [e]word:
and in faithfulness all his [f]work.
He loveth [g]justice and judgment:
the earth is [h]full of the goodness of Jehovah.
By Jehovah's word were the [i]heavens made;
and all their host by the breath of his mouth.
He masseth as a [j]heap the waters of the sea;
he layeth up the depths in treasuries.
Let all the earth [k]fear Jehovah:
let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.
For *he* [l]spake, and it was done:
he commanded, and it stood fast.

e Ps. 19. 8. *cf.* Prov. 8. 6-8.
f Ps. 36. 5. *cf.* Gen. 8. 22 with Jer. 33. 19-26.
g Ps. 11. 7. Ps. 45. 7. Ps. 97. 2.
h Ps. 104. 24. Ps. 119. 64.
i Gen. 1. 1, 6, 7, 14-19. Job 26. 13. Ps. 8. 3.
j Gen. 1. 9. Job 38. 8-11.
k Ju. 5. 4. Ps. 114. 7. Ps. 104. 32; Is. 64. 1, 2.
l Gen. 1. 3, 6, etc.; 2 Pet. 3. 5; *cf.* Matt. 8; 26, 27.

is that the harp was certainly peculiarly connected with strains of joy; while the "ten strings" of the lyre or psaltery would *seem* to associate it with the more solemn strains of recompense and judgment, all of which must praise Him too.

But no *special* instrument is connected with the "new song" of the third verse, which will be, assuredly, both for Israel and the earth, what the numeral probably intimates, a *resurrection* song. And this, like all resurrection of the higher kind, is not a mere restoration to the primitive condition, which would mean almost certainly that it was a mere turning of the wheel, the beginning of the old cycle of transition and decay, but a new and higher and fixed condition reached, in which the thought of God will now be realized, and His purpose from the beginning attained. No wonder that for the accompaniment now there should need skillful playing with loud sound!

2. We have now the testimony given to Him by His work and word; His work being indeed the product of His word, the creation of His mind and will, bearing the impress, therefore, of His character. The *written* word does not seem here in question, although of course the same must be true of it, and more manifestly, sin having come in to obscure the witness of creation. But sin also does not come as yet into the picture, except quite inferentially.

"For right is Jehovah's word, and in faithfulness all His work": as in truth the fixed laws that pervade it are a proof,—so fixed, so pervasive, that in all material points we soon get familiar with, and learn to rely on them. And this is an inestimable blessing which only our being so accustomed to it tends to hide from us. Suppose, even, they *were* certain, and yet so intricate as to make the knowledge of common effects difficult to obtain, what uncertainty would attend all our actions, and what disasters would arise! Instead of this we are in a world generally stable, and with only enough uncertainty to promote dependence. And all this is "faithfulness" to His creatures, the work of His hands who can apprehend these laws; while instinct guides even more surely, though in a more humble manner, the lower races. But moreover,—

"He loveth justice and judgment";—it is not here in question how *men* pervert it, but of these same laws in their moral character, which testify for Him. The power which earth manifests is a power that "makes for righteousness." And "the earth is full of the *goodness* of Jehovah." This is that diffuse benevolence which everything displays in nature, the eye, the ear, the senses generally, provided for and gratified; and beauty, melody, variety, showing with much else, (even though we are outside of Eden,) how God has cared for us. Life could go on without what only their prevalence and their inability to pall and injure us, forbid us to call the *luxuries* of life.

The heavens and their host were called forth by Jehovah's word; a majestic spectacle to arrest attention, wake up wonder and inquiry, and lift our thoughts above the earth. Preachers to us of our littleness and dependence, their testimony is manifestly in the line of His redemptive work. The philosopher Kant,

3 (10-12): The realization of His name. (i.) power against which none can stand. (ii.) contrasted with the fleeting generations of men. (iii.) the portion of His people.

4 (13-17): The weakness of the creature. (i.) in the light of His presence. (ii.) closely discerned. (iii.) by Him who knoweth the hearts. (iv.) the weakness of the mighty (v.) even to escape.

Jehovah bringeth to [m]naught the counsel of the nations:
he disalloweth the thoughts of peoples.
The [n]counsel of Jehovah standeth forever:
the thoughts of his heart from [o]generation to generation.
[p]Happy is the nation whose God Jehovah is:
the people he has chosen for his [q]inheritance.

Jehovah regardeth from heaven:
he [r]beholdeth all the sons of men.
From the place of his habitation,
he looketh narrowly upon all the inhabitants of the earth:—
He who [s]fashioneth their hearts together:
who understandeth all their works.
There is no [t]king saved by the multitude of a host:
by great strength is no mighty man delivered.
The [u]horse is a vain thing for safety:
and by his great strength he shall not deliver.

m Ps. 2. 2-4. Is. 8. 9, 19. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 19-21.
n ctr. ver. 10. *cf.* Rom. 11. 29.
o Deut. 7. 9. *cf.* Eph. 3. 10, 11.
p De. 33. 29. Ps. 144. 15.
q Deut. 32.9. Ex. 19. 5. *ctr.* Eph. 1. 18.
r Ps. 11. 4. Ps. 102. 19. Jer. 16. 17.
s cf. Gen. 2.7. Prov. 22. 2
t cf. Is. 37. 36-38.
u Prov. 21. 31. Is. 31. 1-3.

whose critical spirit was not checked with any excessive reverence, unites "the starry heavens" with the "moral law" as that which filled him with unfailing admiration and reverence. And how easily might they have been shut out from our view, if God had not pleased to fling aside the veil, and bid us gaze! Whatever else those brilliant spheres were made for, they have surely been unveiled to impress us with the sight. They are an open Bethel: as, in the mind of the old patriarch, "the gate of heaven" is "the house of God."

Under these—their earthly reflection—stretches the great sea, whose waters, massed as a heap under Jehovah's hand, still more, as with closer application, reduce man to nothingness before Him (Psalm cvii. 23–30). The number of testing and of weakness points unmistakably to the meaning here, as does the word for "depths," the plural of that in Genesis i. 2, *tehom*, literally, the "raging deep." These depths He layeth up beneath the quiet and smiling surface, in treasuries from which He bringeth them out whenever He has use for them, with decisive effect. Thus were the heathen sailors who carried Jonah, and Jonah himself, taught the folly of endeavoring to escape from Jehovah's power.

After this, therefore, comes the exhortation, "Let all the earth fear Jehovah: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him": literally, "sojourn," be as sojourners with Him, to whom alone belongs eternity. The argument is given in the next verse: "for He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast:" these mighty and stable powers came into existence by His mere fiat. The number is here the number of mastery; for He who brought them into being manifestly has them still in His control.

3. From this contemplation of creation we are next brought naturally to consider Jehovah as realizing His name (the Unchangeable) in His dealings with His creatures. Against His counsel the counsels of the nations cannot stand. Nor, since the world is away from Him, and in opposition to Him, the thoughts of peoples either. The last would include, as the first does not, even Israel His "people" also. On the other hand, *His* counsel stands forever: the thoughts of *His* heart "from generation to generation." The contrast here only results in more abiding comfort for those whose feebleness is anchored to the rock of His stability, "the nation whose God Jehovah is, and the people chosen" by Him (as Israel is) "for His inheritance."

4. From this safe harbor the world of living men is now reviewed. Jehovah Himself regards them: He not only beholds, He scrutinizes narrowly; and He is

5 (18-22): the weak with the Strong.
(i.) under His eye.
(ii.) for preservation.
(iii.) realized.
(iv.) the experience.
(v.) divine government.

Lo, Jehovah's eye is toward them that [v]fear him:
toward those who hope in his mercy,—
To [w]rescue their soul from death,
and to keep them alive in [x]famine.
Our soul hath looked for Jehovah:
our [y]help and shield is he.
For our heart is glad in him;
because we have [z]trusted in his holy name.
Let thy mercy, Jehovah, be upon us,
according as we [a]hope in thee.

v Ps. 34.9,15. Ps. 147. 11.
w Ps. 68. 20. Ps. 103. 4.
x *cf.* 1 Ki.17. 1-7. *cf.* Jer. 37. 21.
y Ps. 115. 9-11. Ps. 28. 7.
z Ps. 13. 5. 1 Pet. 1. 8.
a Ps. 25. 2, 3. *cf* Heb. 6. 18, 20.

[5]PSALM XXXIV.

Ps. xxxiv.

Jehovah with us, and its consequences in divine government.

[A psalm] of David when he [b]changed his behavior before Abimelech, who drove him away and he departed.

1 (1-4): Jehovah!
(i.) the constant theme.
(ii.) a witness which the humble hear.

(*Aleph.*)
I will bless Jehovah at [c]all times:
continually shall his praise be in my mouth.
(*Beth.*) In Jehovah my soul shall [d]boast:
the [e]humble shall hear of it and be glad.

b 1 Sam. 21. 10-15.
c Ps. 84. 4. *cf.* Eph. 5. 20. *cf.* Col.3.17.
d Jer. 9. 23, 24. Ps. 44. 8. 1 Cor. 1. 31.
e Ps. 66. 16. *cf.* Lk.2.38.

the One who fashioned them, who has perfect knowledge of all they do. But the result is only that man's nothingness is once more realized. Not the host that encircles a king can save him, nor the strength of a hero. Nor, even to escape, can the strength of a horse suffice to deliver him. But this is only the necessary prelude to another witness to God Himself.

5. "Lo, Jehovah's eye is toward them that fear Him,—toward those that hope in His mercy, to rescue their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine." And they who speak have realized this: "our soul hath looked for Jehovah: our help and shield is He." The experience is briefly but sufficiently told, that has established the truth of this: "for our heart is glad in Him; because we have trusted in His holy Name." The faithfulness of the divine government is finally invoked: "Let thy mercy, Jehovah, be upon us, according as we hope in Thee."

Thus that Jehovah, the God of redemption, is also the God of creation, is plainly the theme of the psalm; and that He shows Himself the Redeemer by His dealings with the people whose trust is in Him; against whom no creature-strength can possibly avail. This last is taken up and expanded (after the manner of these psalms) in the joyful song of praise with which this series ends.

Psalm XXXIV.

The thirty-fourth psalm, according to its title, was written when David escaped from Gath, from Achish, here called Abimelech, which seems to have been a common title of the Philistine kings. He had failed sadly, as we know, and as on Philistine ground he always did; and, not honoring Jehovah, had not been honored by Him. This is itself a general principle of divine government, of which the psalm speaks, and which needs little insisting on. Yet God had in mercy delivered him, and he had learned, no doubt, for the time, a lesson from it, though the root of failure, we may well believe, had not been reached. The circumstances seem thus to suit the psalm, though we may be able to point out no precise link of connection between them.

The theme of the psalm, as already said, is that Jehovah is at all times to be blessed, for, whatever the circumstances, He abides the unfailing help and sanctification of His people. As Governor of all things, they too are subject to His government, for what blessing every step of the way the subject soul shall realize, but the end shall declare to all.

1. In the first section it is what Jehovah is that fills the heart and mouth. He

(iii.) His name to be magnified.
(iv.) the experience.

(*Gimel.*) Oh magnify Jehovah with me;
and let us exalt his name [f]together.
(*Daleth.*) I sought Jehovah, and he answered me,
and [g]rescued me from all my fears.

2 (5–10): His salvation.
‡ (i.) light. ‡
(ii.) salvation from all † straits.
(iii.) walled round about.
(iv.) appeal to experience.

(*He.*) [Men] look unto him, and are enlightened,
and their faces are [h]never ashamed.
(*Zain.*) This poor man [i]cried, and Jehovah heard him,
and saved him out of all his straits.
(*Cheth.*) The angel of Jehovah [j]campeth around them that fear him,
and delivereth them.
(*Teth.*) [k]Taste and see that Jehovah is good:
happy the man that taketh [l]refuge in him.

(v.) governmental help.
(vi.) mastery of circumstances.

(*Jod.*) O [m]fear Jehovah! ye his saints:
for there is no want to them that fear him.
(*Caph.*) The young [n]lions lack, and suffer hunger;
but they that seek Jehovah shall not want any good.

[f] *cf.* Mk. 5. 19, 20. *cf.* Lk. 15. 6, 7.
[g] vers. 17. 19.
[h] Ps. 25. 2, 3.
[i] Ps. 50. 15. Ps. 107. 6.
[j] 2 Ki. 6. 17. Acts 12. 7–11.
[k] *cf.* Jno. 1. 38, 39, 46. 1 Pet 2. 3.
[l] Ps. 2. 12. Ps. 84. 12.
[m] Ps. 19. 9. Prov. 22. 4. 1 Pet. 1. 17–19.
[n] Job. 4. 10, 11. *cf.* Dan. 6. 22, 23.

is and shall be the constant theme of the soul—its perpetual praise. For this "all times" are alike; all seasons have their summer fruit. The exhortation of the apostle in the New Testament agrees with this resolve of the psalmist in the Old Testament: "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I will say, Rejoice." If the eye is fully upon Him, this will be realized.

There is a testimony in praise like this, which will be felt. No doubt, it will awaken opposition; but that is not what is spoken of here: it is that the *humble* will hear, and be glad. "No flesh shall glory in His presence," and we have need thus to be brought down, to receive testimony of such a character.

The heart that is filled with praise will seek associates also in it; and His Name will be common joy: for His Name is but the revelation of Himself. The exhortation to magnify His Name is followed by the experience which makes the text, as it were, of the exhortation. The living God had heard and answered him, and delivered him from *all* his fears.

2. Now we have this salvation of God, which makes Him known, displayed in its various features. There is first of all in it light, for God is light. Things appear as they are, and we learn to recognize them,—to have truth in the inward parts, and certainty as to the way. And this is not an exceptional experience,—it is the universal rule for those that look to Him. They are enlightened; and their faces are never "ashamed." Confusion as to one's thoughts and ways naturally leads to confusion of face as to the result. Where the soul truly seeks God, this is impossible; and thus there is provision made for the simplest and poorest, amid all the babble of tongues that the world is witness of. Nor could it be otherwise, God being what He is.

Again he recurs to his own deliverance. He in his poverty had been heard and delivered: not simply from his fears now, but in fact. And he will go further and maintain that round about those that fear Jehovah the angel of Jehovah camps: and this is deliverance from all that may come, from any quarter.

Then he appeals to men to make the experiment for themselves: let them taste and see that Jehovah is good; for happy is the man (*gebher*, the strong man,—evidently finding his strength in this) that takes refuge in Him. And then His saints are exhorted to His fear: there is no want to them that fear Him. Finally this is affirmed in the fullest way with regard to those who seek Him; the number showing, no doubt, their "mastery" of circumstances, as the parallel, too, implies: for the lions might seem, amid the lesser animals by

3 (11-16): The holiness of divine government. (i.) the fear of Jehovah as the beginning of wisdom. (ii.) preservation. (iii.) the mouth (as index of the heart.) (iv.) the walk. (v.) the righteous favored. (vi.) the wicked cut off.

(*Lamed.*) Come, ye children, hearken unto me:
I will [o]teach you the fear of Jehovah.
(*Mem.*) Who is the man that [p]desireth life;
that loveth [many] days, that he may see good?
(*Nun.*) Guard thy [q]tongue from evil,
and thy lips from speaking deceit.
(*Samech.*) [r]Depart from evil, and do good:
seek peace, and pursue it.
(*Ayin.*) The eyes of Jehovah are [s]toward the righteous,
and his ears are toward their cry.
(*Pe.*) The face of Jehovah is [t]against them that do evil;
to cut off their [u]remembrance from the earth.

4 (17, 18): The experience of trial. (i.) the universal rule. (ii.) the humble delivered.

(*Tsaddi.*) [Men] cry, and Jehovah heareth,
and [v]delivereth them out of all their straits.
(*Koph.*) Jehovah is [w]nigh to the broken of heart,
and the contrite of spirit he saveth.

o *cf.* Ps. 51. 12, 13.
p 1 Pet. 3. 10-12. *cf.* Phil. 1. 20.
q James 1. 26. James 3. 2-12.
r Ps. 37. 27. Is. 55. 7.
s Ps. 32. 8. Ps. 33. 18.
t Lev. 20. 3. Jer. 21. 10. *ctr.* Ps. 31. 16.
u Prov. 10. 7. Eccl. 8. 10. Ps. 9. 5, 6.
v Ps. 107. 17-19.
w Deut. 4. 7. Ps. 145. 18. Ps. 138. 6. Is. 57. 15.

which they are surrounded, to be masters if any are. Yet *they* might lack; but not the man who seeks Jehovah.

3. The third section emphasizes the holiness of the Lord in His ways: a holiness to which he must be conformed with whom He goes. As supreme over all, the fear of Him is for His creature the "beginning of wisdom." A government, to be respected, must first of all be strong; and it is by the exhibition of His power that God humbles Job. He must maintain His place, or all would be lost. We are in His hands, and He will have His way; but then His goodness will make us delight that He should have it. "The fear of Jehovah is clean, enduring forever;" and the psalmist now proposes to instruct men in this fear. If a man wants life, and to see good days, here is the divine preservative for him. Let him keep, then, his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking guile. For "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," and the government of the tongue is the sign of the perfect man. (Luke vi. 45, Jas. iii. 2.) Let him order his walk so as to depart from evil—the negative side—and do good—the positive. Let him seek peace thus, as "the effect of righteousness" (Isa. xxxii. 17), and earnestly "pursue it." And the psalmist urges the blessing for the righteous, and the end of the wicked: the first, in the continual favor of Jehovah; the last, to be cut off, even in remembrance.

4. This is the holy way of the Lord, then; and this is the portion of the righteous. True as that is, it is not all the truth. There is trial also, and that for the righteous; and, as he presently acknowledges, even much of it. What then, is the meaning of this? Well, first, that it is in being brought down by it that men cry to God, and learn His delivering grace. And then it is to the broken of heart that He is nigh; and the contrite that He saveth. There is thus abundant reason for all the trial of which the world is full.

5. But that is not recompense: it is really mercy. When we think of recompense, it is true that even the righteous suffer; nay, their afflictions are many; but the principle already given applies to them also, and in result it is not forgotten who they are: deliverance out of *all* awaits them. Suppose they die even: Jehovah guards their bones, and suffers them not to be broken,—an example of such perfect care, as in the case of the Lord was shown in the fullest way, and under circumstances which mark Him as the absolutely Righteous One. None could claim such care in the same sense as He; and so it became for Him a *prophecy* that needs must be fulfilled (Jno. xix. 36), and that to the letter. To others it applies, one would say, in the spirit of it. The application to the Lord

5 (19-22): Governmental recompense.
(i.) the universal rule.
(ii.) preservation even in death.
(iii.) the full realization.
(*a*) a congruous end.
(*b*) salvation of those that trust Him.

(*Resh.*) [x]Many are the afflictions of the righteous;
but out of them all Jehovah delivereth them.
(*Schin.*) He keepeth all his [y]bones:
not one of them is broken.
(*Tau.*) Evil shall bring death to the [z]wicked:
and the haters of the righteous shall bear [their] guilt.
Jehovah [a]redeemeth the soul of his servants;
and none shall bear guilt that take refuge in him.

x Ps.129.1-5. *cf.* Matt. 5. 10-12.
y Ps. 35. 10. *cf.* Jno. 19-36. *ctr.* Ps.51.8.
z Ps. 55. 23.
a Ps. 25. 22.

SERIES 3. (Psalms xxxv.-xxxix.)

The holiness of God, whether in judgment or in grace.

Ps. xxxv.

[1]PSALM XXXV.

The appeal of the righteous for righteous judgment upon the persecutor.

1 (1-6): The appeal to power.
(i.) for congruous treatment of them.
(ii.) and deliverance.

[A psalm] of David.

[b]STRIVE, Jehovah, with them that strive with me:
fight against them that fight against me.
Take hold of [c]shield and buckler,
and rise up for my help.

b Ps. 26. 1. Ps. 43. 1. 1 Sam. 24. 15.
c Ps. 18. 2.

in this way does not, of course, make the psalm as a whole Messianic, but the contrary: everything seems as general as possible, though His unique perfection makes it seem intended for Himself alone.

The full realization of these governmental ways of God is given in the last two verses, which manifestly go together as paired opposites, and in a striking way. They remind one of the apostle's language (Rom. vi. 23), that "the wages of sin is death; but the *gift* of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." So here the judgment of sin is, as it were, mere congruity: "Evil shall bring death to the wicked; and the haters of the righteous shall bear their guilt." But the deliverance of the soul of His servants is on Jehovah's part a true salvation work,—congruous, of course, with His holiness, and yet only by the grace which shines through all: "Jehovah redeemeth the soul of His servants; and none shall bear guilt that take refuge in Him."

Thus fittingly the second series of these remnant psalms is closed.

Series 3.

The third series displays the holiness of God, whether in judgment or in grace, the middle psalm of the series—again a third,—showing this in an especial manner, as might be anticipated, and in both ways. Almost the whole psalm is thus divided by the alphabetic structure into couplets of verses, which develop the contrasted portions of righteous and wicked, and with special reference to the inheritance of the land by the righteous only. The psalms on either side of this, take up respectively (psalms xxxv., xxxvi.) God's dealings with the wicked; and (psalms xxxviii., xxxix.) those with the righteous. The whole of them are simple in character, as is natural, for they are intended to make things plain. Thus comment will be naturally briefer also.

PSALM XXXV.

The thirty-fifth psalm gives us that of which the Lord speaks in the gospel of Luke (chap. xviii. 1-8), the cry of God's elect, suffering since Abel's time, at the hand of the persecutor, and for which judgment yet will be poured out. Often a voiceless cry, sometimes exchanged, as in Stephen's case, and the many of Christian times of which he was the proto-martyr, for the prayer, "Lord, lay

(iii.) God Himself the salvation of His own.
(iv.) for their prostration.
(v.) for divine pursuit of them.
(vi.) and a speedy end.

Draw out also the [d]spear,
and stop the way against my pursuers;
say unto my soul, I am thy [e]salvation.
Let them be put to [f]shame and confounded, that seek after my soul:
let them be turned back and put to confusion, that desire my hurt.
Let them be as [g]chaff before the wind;
and let the [h]angel of Jehovah chase [them].
Let their way be [i]dark and slippery,
and let the angel of Jehovah pursue them.

2 (7-10): The plea against the enemy.
(i.) of personal righteousness.
(ii.) for his self-destruction.
(iii.) that Jehovah may be the joy of the soul.
(iv.) as the experience of the needy.

For [j]without cause have they hid for me their [k]net in a pit:
without cause have they digged it for my soul.
Let [l]destruction come upon him unawares:
and let his net which he hath hidden, [m]catch himself:
into destruction let him fall therein.
And my soul shall [n]exult in Jehovah:
it shall rejoice in his salvation.
All my [o]bones shall say, Jehovah, who is like unto thee,
who deliverest the afflicted from him that is [p]stronger than he:
yea, the afflicted and needy from him that spoileth him?

d cf. Josh. 8. 18, 19, 26. Hab. 3. 11.
e Ps. 27. 1. Ex. 15. 2.
f Ps. 40. 14-16. Ps. 70. 2. Ps. 71. 13.
g Ps. 1. 4. Isa. 17. 13. Hos. 13. 3. Dan. 2. 35.
h ctr. Ps. 34. 7. *cf.* 2 Chr. 32. 21.
i Jer. 13. 16. Jer. 23. 12.
j cf. 1 Sam. 19. 5. Ps. 119. 161. Prov. 1. 11. *cf.* Jno. 15. 25.
k Mi. 7. 2. Ps. 9. 15.
l cf. Ps. 69. 22-28. *ctr.* Lk. 23. 34.
m Ps. 10. 2. Prov. 5. 22.
n cf. Ex. 15. 1, 21. *cf.* Rev. 12. 10-12. *ctr.* Lk. 15. 7.
o Ps. 34. 20. Ps. 51. 8. *ctr.* Ps. 32. 3.
p cf. Ps. 18. 17.

not this sin to their charge!" it finds at last full expression at the lips of the Jewish remnant of the last days. The long-suffering of God is then fast running out, and the prayer is in full harmony with the mind of God. In this psalm it is a fully argued plea, and one which He admits and acts upon. It shows how fully God's judgment is in sympathy with all that is good and true, in the unequal conflict between good and evil in a fallen world, and in the interests of the earth itself, to destroy those that destroy it (Rev. xi. 18).

1. The whole psalm is thus a cry, but especially the first part is purely this, an appeal to power in their behalf. The argument comes later in the character and acts of those against whom judgment is sought. The cry is, however, measured carefully, and the numerical structure is as marked as elsewhere. "Strive, Jehovah, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me:" give them treatment congruous to their own behavior. Then we see how needed is the help he craves: for his first thought is of "shield and buckler"—of course, to be interposed between him and his foes. But he soon advances to offensive weapons, and seeks Jehovah to stand in the way, with leveled spear between him and his pursuers: to be Himself his salvation. All that God is would thus be pledged in his behalf. Then he is free to think more of the enemies, first of all praying for their prostration and overthrow; then chased by the angel of Jehovah as the wind chases the chaff; finally that their way as thus pursued may be dark and slippery, so that they will fall and rise no more.

2. Now he brings his plea for their destruction: first, the causelessness of their plots against him, their net hid carefully in the pit into which he is to fall; then, that it will only be to let their own trap catch them,—themselves to be the cause of their own destruction: for which none surely will be to blame but they themselves. Jehovah will thus become the exultation of his soul, and that as found in the experience of one needy and afflicted, having no other helper. The righteous and the wicked, God and his creature man, will thus be all in their right

3 (11-16): The case brought out in behalf of the saint.

(i.) personal righteousness.

(ii.) evil for good.

(iii.) the heart toward God for them.

(iv.) outward behavior.

(v.) the recompense they made.

(vi.) the limit against which they chafed.

(vii.) the case completed and put into the Lord's hand.

(viii.) the new condition awaiting the answer.

Unrighteous [q]witnesses rise up:
they lay to my charge things that I know not.
They recompense me [r]evil for good,
to the bereavement of my soul.
But as for me, when [s]they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth:
I humbled my soul with fasting,
and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.
I behaved myself as though he had been my [t]friend —my brother:
I bowed down heavily, as mourning for a mother.
But at my halting they [u]rejoiced and gathered together:
the slanderers gathered together against me ere I knew:
they tare me, and ceased not.
With profane [v]jesters for bread,
they [w]gnashed upon me with their teeth.
Lord, [x]how long wilt thou look on?
rescue my soul from their destructions,
my [y]only one from the lions!
I will celebrate thee in the [z]great congregation:
I will praise thee among much people.

q *cf.* 1 Sam. 22. 9. *cf.* 1 Ki. 21. 13. *cf.* Acts 6. 13-15. *cf.* Matt. 26. 59-62.
r Ps. 38. 20. *cf.* Ps. 109. 4, 5. Jno. 10. 32.
s Job 30. 25. *cf.* Jas. 1. 27.
t *cf.* Matt. 5. 43-48. *cf.* Rom. 12. 19-21.
u *cf.* 2 Sam. 1. 20. Ps. 94. 3, 4.
v Jer. 20. 7. Lam. 3. 14.
w Lam. 2. 16. *cf.* Acts 7. 54.
x Ps. 13. 1, 2.
y *cf.* Ps. 22. 20.
z *cf.* Ps. 22. 25.

place. The plea, brief as it is, has thus in it all the elements of successful prayer.

3. But, while these are the principles, the case needs to be more fully stated; and this is done in the two sections that follow: here, in behalf of the saint; while in the next, that of the sinner alone is in question. And here again, first, personal righteousness is affirmed: unrighteous witnesses—literally, witnesses of violence, violently wresting things to make out their charges—laid against him things of which his conscience was entirely free. Instead of this, he was conscious only of good that he had done them, which they now recompensed with evil, so that his soul stood alone, bereft of the support it might have counted on from it. Then he shows what in reality had been his state towards them, and that before God Himself. When they were sick, he had fasted and prayed, even in sackcloth. He had mourned them as for friends,—yea, brother or mother. And now, at the least sign of evil upon his part, the tongues of evil rang out against him, wholly unprepared for it; and with mocking parasites, they gnashed their teeth—in vain, for God had set them their limit. (This is what the gnashing of the teeth, I think, implies, as the numeral does,—a limit against which they chafed: conscious, as it were, of the fence not permitted them to pass, although invisible, which God had put round His beloved.)

This is the case on his side, in attestation of his integrity, which he thus spreads out and puts into the Lord's hand as supreme, urging whether He can any longer be content, knowing it all, merely to look on. There had been indeed a limit: was it not ready now to be overstepped? "Rescue my soul," he cries, "from their destructions! my only one from the lions!" It is the cry of the twenty-second psalm (ver. 20) again: the cry of the chief Sufferer wrung out of others here, as we find features like His in other parts of this description. Is it not intended to remind us that God is Himself linking in this His Well-beloved with these also beloved? putting upon them, as it were, the frankincense of the meat-offering? And so the Priest-Angel of the Apocalypse (Rev. viii. 2–5) adds to the prayers of the saints the incense, which find answer then in the judgments by which the earth is to be cleansed and made ready for the coming blessing. Here, too, the blessing is looked on to, the "great congregation" and the "much

4 (19-23): The sin that calls for judgment.

(i.) against right.

(ii.) against peace.

(iii.) against reality.

(iv.) the appeal to Him who tests all things.

(v.) the appeal to government.

Let not those that are wrongfully mine enemies [a]rejoice over me!
[let them not] wink with the eye that hate me without cause!
For they speak not peace:
but against the [b]quiet in the land devise deceitful things.
And they opened wide their mouth against me:
they said, [c]Aha, aha! our eye hath seen it.
Thou hast seen it, Jehovah; keep not [d]silence:
Lord, be not [e]far from me!
Stir up thyself, and [f]awake for my right:
for my cause, my God and my Lord.

a Ps. 25. 2. *cf.* 1 Sam. 2. 3.
b *cf.* Ps. 120. 5-7.
c ver. 25. Ps. 40. 15.
d Ps. 83. 1. Ps. 109. 1.
e *cf.* Ps. 22. 11. Ps. 10. 1.
f Ps. 44. 23. *cf.* Ps. 121. 3, 4.

5 (24-28): The judgment sought.

(i.) according to right.

(ii.) for deliverance.

(iii.) for reality.

(iv.) for the blessing of the earth.

(v.) man with God.

Judge me according to my [g]righteousness, Jehovah my God:
and let them not rejoice over me.
Let them not say in their heart, Aha, so would we have it!
let them not say, We have [h]swallowed him up.
Let them be ashamed and [i]confounded together, that rejoice at my ill:
let them be clothed with shame and dishonor, that magnify themselves against me.
Let them shout for joy, and [j]rejoice, that delight in my righteousness:
yea, let them say continually,
let Jehovah be [k]magnified that hath delight in the prosperity of his servant.
And my tongue shall talk of [l]thy righteousness,—
thy praise all the day long.

g Ps. 7. 8. Ps. 26. 1.
h Ps. 14. 4. Ps. 56. 2. *cf.* Lam. 2. 16 with Lam. 2. 5.
i Ps. 40. 14, 15. Ps. 70. 2, 3.
j Ps. 40. 16.
k Ps. 34. 3.
l Ps. 71. 16, 24.

people" before whom redeemed Israel shall celebrate the God who has come in for them. And this is another link with the twenty-second psalm (ver. 25).

4. Now follows the more distinct statement of the sin that calls for judgment, to which, we shall see in the next section, the judgment exactly answers. First, once more, the causeless hatred of the righteous, which, being causeless, has in fact its cause in their righteousness itself. For righteousness, therefore, must the judgment come: evil must not be permitted to rejoice over it.

Next comes the sin against peace,—the spirit of conflict and war which has so long possessed itself of the earth and cursed it. To those of such a spirit, the quiet in the land would be themselves the cause of opposition. But the Prince of peace comes, who is to restore peace.

Next comes the sin against reality,—here still in the form of opposition to the righteous. But this is linked with all the falsehood elsewhere, the spirit that puts evil for good and good for evil, and miscalls and confuses things all over the world.

Now comes the appeal to Him who knows the reality of things.—whose Presence makes all things at once come to their true form. "Keep not silence: be not far from me! Stir up Thyself and awake for my right: for my cause, my God and my Lord!"

5. The appeal for judgment extends through all the remainder of the psalm, and characterizes this last section, which the twenty-third verse only leads on to. after a manner very common all through this series, and which has been remarked upon before. The appeal here is, first of all, in behalf of righteousness; then for

Ps. xxxvi.

[z]PSALM XXXVI.

The alienation of the wicked from God contrasted with Him in whom the sons of men take refuge.

To the chief musician: [a psalm] of David, the [m]servant of Jehovah.

1 (1-4): The rebel.
(i.) his insubjection to God.
(ii.) his flattery of himself.
(iii.) the fountain of his heart.
(iv.) his way.

THE [n]revolt of the wicked assureth me within my heart,
there is [o]no fear of God before his eyes.
For he [p]flattereth himself in his own eyes,—
to find [at last] his iniquity to be [q]hateful.
The words of his mouth are [r]vanity and deceit:
he hath [s]left off wisdom and doing good.
He [t]deviseth vanity upon his bed:
he setteth himself in a way that is not good:
he [u]abhorreth not evil.

2 (5-9): God the Preserver.
(i.) His faithfulness.
(ii.) His surpassing care.

Thy [v]mercy, Jehovah, is in the heavens:
thy [w]faithfulness unto the skies.
Thy righteousness is like the [x]mountains of strength;
thy judgments are a great [y]deep:
thou [z]preservest man and beast, Jehovah.

m *cf.* Ps. 90, Title.
n *ctr.* Ps 32. 1.
o Rom. 3.18. *cf* Prov. 1. 7. 1 Pet. 1. 17, 18.
p *cf.* Lk. 18. 11, 12.
q *cf.* Nu. 32. 23. *cf.* Prov. 23. 32.
r Ps. 4. 2.
s *cf.* Ps. 106. 13. *cf.* Gal. 1. 6. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 10.
t Prov. 4. 16. *ctr.* Ps. 149. 5.
u *ctr.* Ps. 97. 10.
v Ps. 103. 11. Ps. 57. 10.
w Lam. 3. 23. 1 Pet. 4. 19.
x Ps. 125. 2.
y Ps. 77. 19; Hab. 3. 15.
z Ps. 104. 20, 21; *cf.* Gen. 6. 19-21; *cf.* Jonah 4. 11.

deliverance from those who were just ready to rejoice as having swallowed up the object of their enmity; then for shame and dishonor to be put where they belong, that is, upon the foes of righteousness. And then, as it seems to me, Israel being manifestly the speaker, it is urged that the nations should be made to rejoice in delivered Israel's joy, as we know they will do. While they themselves, the people of God once more, and with no temporary return to God as so often before, will talk of His righteousness and of His praise all the day long.

Psalm XXXVI.

The thirty-sixth psalm is a yet more simple one. It is by David, specially marked here as the "servant of Jehovah," looking at the condition of those who refuse that pleasant service, and putting in contrast with their infatuation the blessedness of those who find their refuge and satisfaction in His abundant goodness. The last three verses pray for the continuance of this blessedness, and foresee the casting down of the wicked, without power to rise again.

There are twelve verses to the psalm, but quite exceptional in their division as such; nor can I at present give any reason for this.

1. Four verses give us the complete description of the wicked: Godward, selfward, in his words, and in his ways. His revolt—his lawlessness—is (literally) as a divine utterance, an oracle, within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes. And as, where God is hidden, we may be sure it is self that hides Him, so it is that with the poorest flattery that can be, he flattereth himself; to find surely at last the evil of his success, and the iniquity he has loved, to be really hateful. His words, which are here, as always, the index of the heart, are necessarily therefore vanity and deceit. The wisdom that has become discredited with him he has left off, and with it the well-doing which is its sure accompaniment, and assurance for what it is. The folly he has planned upon his bed—at the very time when naturally there would be most sobriety—he carries out in a way that is not good, but which is good to him, for "he abhorreth not evil." There the description ends: the principles are given of his life; all else would be only detail.

2. All this is the result of departure from God; the psalmist, therefore, turns now to speak of God—this God from whom men depart. What is He, that they should do this? do it so simply and naturally, as a thing of course? God!

(iii.) Himself the Shelter.
(iv.) human experience.
(v.) life and light of man.

How precious is thy mercy, O God!
and under the [a]shadow of thy wings the sons of men take refuge.
They are abundantly satisfied with the [b]fatness of thy house:
and thou makest them drink of the river of [c]thy pleasures.
For with thee is the [d]fountain of life:
in thy [e]light do we see light.

[a] Ps. 57. 1. Ps. 91. 4. *cf.* Matt. 23. 37.
[b] Ps. 63. 5. Ps. 65. 4. *cf.* Lk. 15. 23.
[c] Ps. 16. 11.
[d] Jer. 2. 13. Jer. 17. 13. *cf.* Ezek. 47. 1. *cf.* Rev. 22. 1.
[e] 1 Jno. 1. 5-7. Jno. 8. 12.

3 (10-12): The realization sought and found.
(i.) mercy and righteousness constant to the upright.
(ii.) deliverance from the wicked.
(iii.) the accomplishment.

[f]Continue thy mercy unto them that know thee:
and thy righteousness to the upright in heart.
Let not the foot of [g]pride come against me:
and let not the hand of the wicked drive me away!
There are the workers of vanity [h]fallen!
they are cast down, and unable to rise.

[f] *cf.* Ps. 90. 16, 17.
[g] Ps. 10. 2. Ps. 123. 4.
[h] Ps. 9. 6.

[3]PSALM XXXVII.

Ps. xxxvii.
1 (1-11): The perpetuity of the blessing of the righteous.
a (1, 2): who may be at peace about the wicked.
(i.)
(ii.) the wicked to be destroyed.

The manifestation of God for the righteous in their possession of the earth.

[A psalm] of David.

(*Aleph.*)
[i]FRET not thyself because of evil-doers:
[j]envy not him that worketh unrighteousness.
For they shall soon be [k]cut down like grass,
and wither like the green herb.

[i] Prov. 24. 19, 20. vers. 7, 8.
[j] Ps. 73. 3. Prov. 3. 31. Prov. 23. 17. Prov. 24. 1.
[k] Ps. 90. 5, 6. Ps. 103. 15. Isa. 40. 6-8.

His mercy is in the heavens,—that is, the *bounteous goodness* which, for Him, is but what His relationship to His creatures implies, and which sun and moon in the heavens preach of daily. His mercy is His faithfulness, firmer than, while expressed in, those laws which bind those glowing orbs to their constant and beneficent circuit. The mountains and the deep, again, speak variously of His stable righteousness and His judgments which are deep—no wonder: for the care of the whole earth is His; man and beast both He blesses and preserves. But for the sons of men alone there is nearer intimacy, the shadow of fostering wings under which they take refuge, blessed and blessing Him who has thus brought them nigh. With the provision of His house He satisfies them,—the world being but this for those who realize His gracious presence in it, His government of it, the treasures with which He has filled it. He makes them to drink of the river of His own pleasures, lifting them up thus to communion with Himself. For with Him is the fountain of creature life; and the light which gives light as to everything is from Himself alone.

3. In the sense of all this, the psalmist commits himself, and all with whom he is linked, to God. He prays for the continuance of this bounteous mercy to those who know Him, and His righteousness to the upright. In the necessary conflict with evil, he prays for deliverance from the foot of pride and the hand of the wicked. And he foresees the necessary collapse of the workers of vanity; an overthrow as complete as final.

Psalm XXXVII.

The thirty-seventh psalm, the third and middle one of the series, has already been noted as the hinge or pivot upon which the rest turn, the full blessing brought in for the righteous in Israel, in their possession of the land. And in this Jehovah manifests Himself, and glorifies Himself upon the earth.

The structure has been noted also as alphabetic; and it is almost perfect in this respect, not quite, if the present division of the verses is correct, as, after all,

b (3, 4): the blessing of faith.
(i.) the faithfulness of God.
(ii.) the answer of love.
c (5, 6): realization and manifestation.
(i.) Jehovah's sufficiency.
(ii.) His testimony in thy favor.
d (7): the strain to be met.
e (8, 9): the government of God active and sure.
(i.) be at peace with thyself and as to all.
(ii.) the diverse portions of evil and good.
f (10, 11): the end of the wicked and the triumph of the righteous.
(i.) the righteous alone in the land.
(ii.) and in abundance.

(*Beth.*) [l]Trust in Jehovah, and do [m]good:
dwell in the land, and [n]feed on faithfulness.
[o]Delight thyself also in Jehovah,
and he shall [p]give thee the requests of thy heart.
(*Gimel.*) [q]Commit thy way unto Jehovah:
trust him also, and he shall [r]accomplish.
And he shall bring forth thy [s]righteousness as the light,
and thy right as the noon-day.
(*Daleth.*) [t]Rest in Jehovah, and [u]wait patiently for him:
fret not thyself because of him that prospereth in his way:
because of him that bringeth mischievous devices to pass.
(*He.*) Cease from [v]anger, and forsake wrath:
fret not thyself, [w]only into doing evil.
For evil-doers shall be [x]cut off:
and they that [y]wait on Jehovah shall [z]inherit the earth.
(*Vau.*) Yet but a [a]little while, and the wicked shall not be:
yea, thou shalt consider his place, and he shall not be.
But the [b]meek shall inherit the earth,
and delight themselves in the [c]abundance of prosperity.

l *cf.* Ps. 16.1. Ps. 25. 2.
m Ps. 34. 14.
n *cf.* Gen. 26. 1–3. *cf.* 1 Ki. 17. 8–16. *cf.* Mt. 4. 4.
o *cf.* Ps. 16. 5, 6. Ps. 43. 4. Ps. 73. 25.
p *cf.* Phil. 4 4–7. *cf.* Ps. 20. 4. *cf.* Ps. 21. 2.
q Prov. 3. 6. *cf.* 2 Chr. 20. 12–17.
r *cf.* Josh. 21. 45. *cf.* Josh. 23. 14.
s *cf.* Esth. 6. 1–11. *cf.* Gen. 39. 20–23 with Gen. 41. 39–45. *cf.* Dan. 6. 7, 22.
t 2 Chr. 14. 11.
u Ps. 27. 14. Ps. 62. 1, 5. Heb. 6. 15.
v *cf.* Eph. 4. 26, 31. Prov. 19. 11.
w Prov. 14. 29. Prov. 15. 18. Prov. 17. 19.
x Ps. 12. 3; Ps. 101. 8. *y* Lam. 3. 26; Ps. 130. 5, 6. *z* vers. 11, 22, 29; Ps. 105. 12, 43, 44. *a* Job 24. 24; Ps. 2. 12; *cf.* Hag. 2. 6. *b* Matt. 5. 5; *ctr.* 2 Cor. 6. 10; *ctr.* Jas. 2. 5 with Phil. 3. 20. *c* *cf.* Deut. 28. 47; *cf.* Deut. 33. 23; Ps. 72. 7.

I believe it is, though I had doubted it. This will be examined in its place (verse 28).

The letters, with three exceptions only, have each a couplet of verses attached, in which we are intended perhaps to realize the markedly antithetical character of the psalm—present and future, righteous and wicked, being thus put in contrast.

Contrary to the general character of the psalms of this series also, there is no prayer heard throughout the present one. All is definitely assured, predictive, and admonitory,—prophetic, that is, all the way through, though couched in general terms only, and in this way more suited to the admonitory purpose.

1. The first section insists on the perpetuity of the blessing of the righteous, in contrast with the speedy and perfect end of the wicked: and makes this an argument for entire rest of heart in committing oneself to God. The present apparent success of wickedness naturally excites to fretfulness and envy of him who seems thus to have so much the best of it as to the things here. But this is to forget that faith's part is necessarily in the unseen: "they shall soon be cut down like grass, and wither like the green herb."

Faith is next exhorted to, in view of Jehovah's faithfulness. The soul may be pastured upon this, and dwell secure;—the peaceable fruits of righteousness being thus encouraged. Let the heart cleave to the Lord in love, and love will be sure to respond, and the requests of the heart so purified be fulfilled.

Let the way too be committed to Him, and difficulties will disappear before Jehovah's sufficiency. Not only will one's purposes thus be realized, but thy righteousness too will be made plain as the light, and thy right as the noon-day.

But patience will be needed also; and one *may* be patient when the end is

2 (12–15): They that take the sword shall perish with the sword.
a (12, 13): the Lord supreme.
(i.) the counsel ag'nst the righteous.
(ii.) the judg't of the Lord.
b (14, 15): the conflict.
(i.) the determination.
(ii.) destruction.
3 (16–20): The portion of the righteous.
a (16, 17): abides with Jehovah.
(i.) their superiority.
(ii.) in contrast with the wicked.
b (18, 19): their salvation.
(i.) perpetuity.
(ii.) preservation in evil days.
c (20): the devoted.

(*Zain.*) The wicked [d]plotteth against the righteous,
and [e]gnasheth on him with his teeth.
The Lord [f]laugheth at him:
for he seeth that his [g]day is coming.
(*Cheth.*) The wicked have drawn the sword, and bent their bow:
to bring down the [h]afflicted and needy;
to slay the upright in way.
Their sword shall enter into their [i]own heart:
and their bows shall be broken.

(*Teth.*) A [j]little that the righteous hath
is more than the abundance of many wicked.
For the arms of the wicked shall be broken:
but Jehovah [k]upholdeth the righteous.
(*Jod.*) Jehovah is he who [l]knoweth the days of the perfect:
and their inheritance shall be forever.
They shall not be ashamed in the [m]time of ill,
and in the days of famine they shall be [n]satisfied.
(*Caph.*) But the wicked shall [o]perish, and Jehovah's enemies be as the fat of lambs:
they have consumed,—into [p]smoke have they consumed away!

d Ps. 10. 8-10. *cf.* Dan. 6. 4-9.
e *cf.* Acts 7. 54. Lam. 2. 16. Ps. 35. 16.
f Ps. 2. 4. Ps. 59. 8. Prov. 1. 26 with Luke 19. 41, 42.
g *cf.* Lk. 16. 25. 1 Sam. 26. 10.
h Ps. 10. 9. Ps. 9. 12. *cf.* Ps. 11. 2.
i Ps. 7. 15, 16. Ps. 9. 15.
j Prov. 16. 8. Prov. 17. 1. *cf.* Heb. 13. 5, 6.
k ver. 24. Ps. 145. 14. 1 Pet. 1. 5.
l Ps. 31. 15. Isa. 65. 22. *cf.* Rom. 14. 7-9.
m Jer. 17. 7, 8. Ps. 33. 18, 19.
n Ps. 36. 8. Ps. 63. 5, 6. Ps. 65. 4.
o Ps. 1. 6. Ps. 9. 3.
p Ps. 68. 2; Isa. 9. 18, 19; Hos. 13. 3.

certain. Let the wicked prosper as he is permitted, and even his mischief prosper. Rest in Jehovah Himself: He is still Jehovah.

The government of God is active still, and sure in the end toward which it works. Cease then from anger and forsake wrath, the only result of which is to make one copy the evil he resents. Evil-doers shall be cut off at last; and the quiet waiters upon Jehovah, these shall inherit the earth (or land).

The last couplet simply develops this,—the end of the wicked, completely rooted out of the land, and the meek inheriting the land at last, satisfied with abundant prosperity.

2. The second section, which is a short one, occupies itself only with the wicked His enmity against the righteous is noted, his plots, with still their limit. The Lord derides his folly, and foresees his end. His sword, already drawn, enters his own heart; his bent bow snaps, instead of discharging itself. It is an illustration of the Lord's words, that they that take the sword shall perish with it, and, of course, a pregnant example of divine government.

3. The third section contrasts the portion of the righteous and the wicked. If the righteous have but little, it is better than the abundance of *many* wicked: one is for a time; the other has the enduring support of Jehovah. Jehovah marks and knows the days of the perfect, and even in the evil time they shall not be ashamed, and in famine they shall be satisfied. As for the wicked, they shall be consecrated to the Lord in their death, who would not be in life, and consume away like animals under the ban, consumed by the fire of wrath and not accepted.

4. We have now, contrasted as before, the *ways* of each,—a longer detail. First, the bounty and grace of the righteous is contrasted with the greed and injustice of the wicked. But those blessed of Jehovah are those in due time to possess the

4 (21-29): The ways of the righteous and the wicked.
a (21, 22): the grace which finds grace.
(i.) the righteous giver.
(ii.) a contrast.
b (23, 24) steps established.
(i.) Jehovah does this.
(ii.) preservation.
c (25, 26) realization.
(i.) the universal rule.
(ii.) his ministry maintained.
d (27-29) the admonition for the walk.
(i.) perpetuity of the right's.

(*Lamed.*) The wicked [q]borroweth, and payeth not again:
but the righteous showeth [r]grace, and giveth.
But those [s]blessed of him shall possess the earth:
and those [s]cursed of him shall be cut off.
(*Mem.*) The [t]steps of a man are established of Jehovah;
and he [u]delighteth in his way.
Though he [w]fall, he shall not be utterly cast down:
for Jehovah is he who upholdeth with his hand.
(*Nun.*) I have been young, and now am old:
yet have I not seen the righteous [x]forsaken,
nor his seed begging bread.
He is always gracious, and [y]lendeth:
and his seed is for blessing.
(*Samech.*) [z]Depart from evil, and do good:
and dwell for evermore.

q ctr. 2 Ki. 6. 5.
r Matt. 5.42. Ps. 112. 5,9.
s cf. Num. 24. 9. Gen. 27.33-36.
t cf. Josh 6. 26 with 1 Ki. 16. 34.
u Prov. 3. 6. *cf.* Ps. 40. 2.
v cf. Col. 1. 10 with Matt. 3. 17.
w Prov. 24. 16. Mi. 7. 8. *cf.* Jno. 21. 15-17. *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 4-10.
x cf. Job 4.7. *ctr.* Ps. 22. 1 with Rom. 8. 35-39.
y ver. 21. Lk. 6.30,35; Deu. 15. 7-11.
z Ps. 34. 14; Is. 1. 16, 17; *cf.* 2 Tim. 2. 19, 21.

land, while the wicked, grasp as he may, shall be cut off under His curse. This seems to me the evident meaning of the verse, although I may be, perhaps, alone in thinking so. To make the cause of the wicked man's not repaying to be his poverty, and that under the curse of God, while the righteous gives as already possessing the earth, seems an entire inversion of the facts as the psalm presents them, as well as a justification of the "wicked," such as in no wise commends itself.

Next we have the steps of a man (like Psalm xxxiv. 8, *gebher*, implying strength), his firm and prosperous steps are "established of Jehovah." It is from Him they get their strength. "And He delighteth in his way"—a way so blessed and strengthened. Thus, if such a man falls, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the hand that he lifts to Jehovah is upheld by Him. He "affords it," as Delitzsch puts it, "a firm point of support or fulcrum, so that he can rise up again."

The psalmist adds to this the realization of it in his own experience. From the days of his youth to his present old age he had not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. The character of the righteous is again given as that of one showing grace and ministering—little righteousness has he who can forget the claims of the needy when his own needs are so many—and this the Lord delights to maintain: "his seed is," not merely blessed, but "for blessing,"—the blessing of others; his ministry is perpetuated in those who spring from him, and learn his ways.

Thereupon the psalmist, naturally enough, turns from this encouraging assurance to admonition: "Depart from evil and do good: and dwell forevermore. For," he adds, "Jehovah is a lover of judgment, and forsaketh not his godly ones: they are preserved forever, but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off. The righteous shall possess the earth (or land), and dwell therein forever."* With this the fourth section of the psalm ends.

*The middle verse here, it will be observed, is of unusual length, and instead of two verses under the *Samech*, there are three: which does not occur under any other letter in the psalm. This of course might very easily be an intentional irregularity, along with the omission of one letter of the alphabetic structure, which is seldom perfectly preserved in these compositions. The two things coming together, however,—the omission of the letter, with the unusual lengthening of the one verse, which if divided in the middle would make four verses here (the regular number if the letter were inserted), naturally raises a question as to the true division. But this seems more than question when we find the omitted letter (*Ain*) standing thus, with only a prepositional letter before it, at the head of the verse so made. The interposed letter (*l'*) is no doubt still an objection; yet but a slight one: for the 39th has also a letter (the copulative v') before the *Tau*, which in a similar way is not to be reckoned. The critics mostly therefore correct the division of the psalm accordingly.

(ii.) Jehovah's love of judgm't preserves them.
(iii.) their possession of the earth.

5 (30-40): The ways of God. *a* (30, 31) with the obedient.
(i.) the counsel of the righteous.
(ii.) confirming his steps. *b* (32, 33) preserving him from the wicked.
(i.) the plotting of the wicked.
(ii.) the opposition of Jehovah. *c* (34): the way of the realization of the inheritance.

For Jehovah is a lover of judgment,
and [a] forsaketh not his godly ones:
they are [b] preserved forever;
but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.
The righteous shall [c] possess the earth,
and dwell therein for [d] ever.

(*Pe.*) The mouth of the righteous [e] meditateth wisdom,
and his tongue speaketh judgment.
The law of his God is in his [f] heart:
his steps shall not [g] slide.
(*Tsaddi.*) The wicked [h] watcheth the righteous:
and seeketh to put him to [i] death.
Jehovah will not [j] abandon him to his hand,
nor condemn him when he is judged.
(*Koph.*) [k] Wait on Jehovah, and keep his way:
and he shall [l] exalt thee to possess the land:
when the wicked is [m] cut off, thou shalt see it.

a ver. 25. *b* Ps. 121. 8. *cf.* Jude 1. Ps. 34. 21, 22. *c cf.* Gen. 15. 7. Ps. 105. 8-12. *d cf.* Isa. 60. 10-20. *cf.* Ps. 72. 17. *e* Ps. 1. 2. Ps. 19. 14. *f* Ps. 119. 11. *cf.* Heb. 8. 10-13. *g* Prov. 10. 9. ver. 23. Ps. 26. 1. *ctr.* Deu. 32. 35. *h cf.* 1 Sam. 18. 9. *cf.* Lk. 11. 54. Ps. 10. 8. *i cf.* Jno. 11. 47-53. *cf.* Jer. 38. 4-6. *j cf.* Acts 12. 4-11; *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 16-18. *k* Ps. 27. 14, etc. *l* Ps. 113. 7, 8; Ps. 85. 1, 2. *m* ver. 9; Ps. 91. 8.

5. The last section, as a deuteronomic one, sums up these ways of God, whether with the righteous or the wicked. They are simple enough, while requiring for the present faith to realize them: for still, in the government of God, "clouds and darkness are round about Him." But the day comes, to which the psalm looks on, in which all will come out fully. In that day "the righteous shall be recompensed on the earth; much more the wicked and the sinner" (Prov. xi. 31). This is the Old Testament side of the truth, let us remember; and we shall fall into great error, if we take it as the *whole* truth. So taken, it has been used, and is quite competent to prove, that there is no heavenly portion for the saints of the present and the past, and only annihilation of personal existence for the wicked. I do not imply that this would be a light penalty, however light man may be disposed to make of it; but it is not what such texts mean. If "the future of the wicked is, to be cut off," this does not mean that he is to have *no* future,—that his portion is extinction; but simply that the earth is to be freed from his presence, and thus from the misery caused by that presence. Even the Old Testament shows us, as we have seen in the Psalms themselves, a *Sheol* which man passes into out of the bodily condition; and the New Testament clearly reveals the Gehenna of the lost on the one hand, the paradise of God for the saved on the other.* I cannot enter into this here, of course: but the "cutting off" and destruction of the wicked are distinctly stated to be "*from the earth*" (Ps. civ. 35; Prov. ii. 22, etc.). All application of these earthly judgments to that judgment which is "*after*" death (Heb. ix. 27) involves a necessarily materialistic use of terms which is foreign to Scripture.

We have six subsections here. First, we are given to see the righteous in that obedience of heart to God which makes his mouth meditate wisdom—that is, utter what his heart has meditated. His tongue, therefore, speaketh judgment

But, on the other hand, the numerical structure decides against this, and maintains the common division. The *Ain* couplet thus restored might be indeed a *fifth* subsection (a governmental lesson); but the first verse would be but a poor first, if it could be taken as such at all: and the 29th could not stand as a second, while the number 3 is stamped upon both clauses of it. The Septuagint addition, which would make the *Samech* begin with "the unjust shall be punished," leaving "they are preserved forever" in the previous section, while it shows that what the critics now accept was not then accepted as the true division, would still less suit the numerical structure.

* See "Facts and Theories of a Future State," *passim*. Loizeaux Brothers, New York.

d (35, 36) the passing away of the wicked.
(i.) his strength and stability.
(ii.) the contrast.
e (37, 38) the end.
(i.) with the upright.
(ii.) the destruction of the wicked.
f (39, 40) the victory.
(i.) Jehovah their strength.
(ii.) and salvation.

(*Resh.*) I have [n]seen the wicked in great power,
and [o]flourishing like a green tree native to the soil.
And I passed by; and lo, he [p]was not:
and I sought him, and he was not to be found.
(*Schin.*) Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright:
for the future of that man is [q]prosperity.
And the revolters shall be destroyed together:
the future of the wicked is, to be cut off.
(*Tau.*) But the [r]salvation of the righteous is of Jehovah:
he is their [s]stronghold in the time of strait.
And Jehovah shall help them and rescue them:
he shall [t]rescue them from the wicked, and save them,
because they have taken refuge in him.

n Job 5. 3. Jere. 12. 2.
o *cf.* Lk. 12. 13–21.
p Ps. 34. 16. Ps. 73. 19, 20.
q *cf.* Job 42. 10–17. *cf.* Jer. 31. 15–17.
r Ps. 3. 8.
s Ps. 18. 2.
t Ps. 107. 2, 3.

—practical discernment of things in their moral or spiritual difference. It is the law of his God in his heart that has thus enlightened him; and walking in the light, he walks securely: his steps do not slide.

But just because he is thus obedient to God, he has his enemies in the wicked, who watch him, and even seek his death. They may even go through the form of trial, and encompass themselves with the similitude of justice, to accomplish their cruel ends; but Jehovah is against them, and, spite of all that may seem to be the case, cannot abandon the righteous to their hand, nor condemn him because they do this. Nay, He will surely justify him.

But the way to the inheritance is in a path of patience; yet the righteous shall possess the land, and see the wicked cut off out of it. In the meanwhile, a partial experience will leave the wicked in power, flourishing like a green tree in its own congenial soil. But this is not the end; and every one can furnish examples of the rapid uprooting and passing away of all this show of strength. Presently he is not; and the ends of the two—the wicked and the upright—how different! The end of the one is peace—or prosperity; and of the other, as rebels against God, to be cut off. Victory is for the righteous; their salvation is of One who cannot fail them. Even in the time of strait He is their stronghold; and what a fortress to be beleaguered by the enemy! He shall help and rescue them as surely as they have fled to Him for refuge.

Psalm XXXVIII.

The two psalms that close the series here take up the question of the holiness of God in connection with the sufferings of the righteous, which confessedly are many, and which, at the time which is continually before us, will be of such exceptional severity. Still they are both of the most general character, containing no special references to that time which would narrow their application in any way. The present one speaks of sin in the believer as that which necessarily entails suffering for him; the judgment of this being *now*, that in the *day* of judgment he may escape it (1 Cor. xi. 32). The New Testament shows us this as the *Father's* judgment, the chastening of His own children that they may be partakers of His holiness (Heb. xii. 10). Not that this is the whole account, however, as the former passage shows; for God must needs maintain His character as the Governor of His creatures before all. So the apostle Peter warns us that "the time is come when judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely"—or "with difficulty"—"be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Pet. iv. 17, 18.)

Ps. xxxviii.

[t]PSALM XXXVIII.

The trial of the righteous which is the result of sin in them.

A psalm of David, to bring to remembrance.

1 (1-4): Conviction.
(i.) the cry of repentance.
(ii.) conflict.
(iii.) the inward realization.
(iv.) the burden of sin.

JEHOVAH, [u]rebuke me not in thy wrath,
nor chasten me in [v]heat of wrath!
For thine [w]arrows stick fast in me;
and thy [x]hand presseth down upon me.
There is no [y]soundness in my flesh because of thine indignation:
there is no health in my [z]bones because of my sin.
For mine [a]iniquities are gone over my head:
as a heavy [b]burden, they are too heavy for me.

2 (5-8): Humiliation.
(i.) the source.
(ii.) the humiliation itself.
(iii.) the inward realization.
(iv.) the burden.

My wounds [c]stink [and] fester,
because of my foolishness.
I am bent, I am [d]bowed down sore:
all the day long I go [e]mourning;
For my [f]loins are full of burning:
and there is no soundness in my flesh.
I am [g]benumbed, I am crushed sore;
I have [h]roared because of the disquiet of my heart.

3 (9-15): Refuge found in God.
(i.) divine knowledge.
(ii.) self-forsaken.
(iii.) isolated by the stroke of God.
(iv.) the outward trial.
(v.) passive and dumb before God.

Lord, before thee is all my desire:
and my sighing is not [i]hid from thee.
My [j]heart throbbeth, my vigor hath forsaken me,
and the [k]light of mine eyes, it too is not with me.
My [l]lovers and my friends stand aloof from my stroke:
and my kindred stand afar off.
But they that seek after my life lay [m]snares [for me]:
and they that are bent upon my hurt speak depths,
and all the day long meditate deceptions.
And I, like one [n]deaf, hear not;
and as a dumb man openeth not his mouth.

[t] Ps. 88. 8. [m] *cf.* Ps. 10. 9, 10; *cf.* Jer. 5. 26. [n] *cf.* 2 Sam. 16. 10, 11.

[u] Ps. 6. 1. Ps. 39. 11.
[v] *cf.* Lam. 2. 1-10. *cf.* Mi. 7. 9.
[w] Deut. 32. 23. Job 6. 4. Lam. 3. 13.
[x] Ps. 32. 4. Isa. 5. 25.
[y] *cf.* Isa. 1. 5, 6. ver. 7.
[z] Ps. 6. 2. Ps. 32. 3. Lam. 1. 13. Lam. 3. 4.
[a] Ps. 25. 7, 11. Ps. 88. 7. *cf.* Ps. 40. 12 with Isa. 53. 5, 6.
[b] Job 23. 2. Ps. 119. 28. *cf.* Mat. 24. 21, 22.
[c] *cf.* Isa. 3. 24. ver. 3. *cf.* Ps. 69. 5.
[d] Ps. 44. 25. Ps. 57. 6. *cf.* Ps. 146. 8.
[e] Ps. 42. 9. *cf.* Am. 8. 8.
[f] Ps. 66. 11. *cf.* Isa. 21. 3.
[g] Lam. 1. 13, 14. Lam. 5. 17.
[h] Ps. 32. 3. Is. 59. 11-13.
[i] Ex. 3. 7. *cf.* Rom. 8. 26, 27.
[j] Ps. 31. 10, 11. *cf.* Ps. 73. 26.
[k] Ps. 31. 9.
[l] Job 19. 13, 19;

1. The first section shows us therefore the soul under conviction, and in dread of the divine anger. We must not expect, notwithstanding the grace realized in the thirty-second psalm, that there will be here the clearness of knowledge which the New Testament has brought to us. Sin is felt and owned, and God's anger is dreaded. Nay, already His arrows stick fast in the sufferer, and the mighty hand of God presses down upon him. He feels it in his whole condition, taking soundness from his flesh, and health from his bones. His sin is the burden upon him, a burden he has not strength to carry.

2. We have next the humiliation and misery of it. The wounds become open sores, which stink and are corrupt. But this corruption has its root in "folly," the opposition spiritually to divine wisdom. He is bent and bowed down under the pressure: mourning all the day long. Again, he cries out of the disease that fills him, no soundness anywhere at all; and again he complains of his feebleness, with an anguish that continually increases.

3. But in the very One who smites faith finds its refuge. He, the Omniscient, is not regardless of his desire, nor ignorant of his misery. To Him he turns when he is, as it were, forsaken of himself, and when his intimates avoid him as under the stroke of God; only his enemies remain, busy with plots against his life. With all this he is like a man deaf and dumb; his mouth stopped, as one before God (xxxix. 9). Self-restrained, he has no reproofs, though their wicked-

(vi.) restraint.
(vii.) rest.

Yea, I am become as a man that heareth not,
and in whose mouth are no [o]rebukes.
For in thee, Jehovah, I [p]hope:
thou shalt answer, O Lord my God.

4 (16-20): The trial.
(i.) supremacy of evil,
(ii.) and my humiliation.
(iii.) which is real.
(iv.) the outward trial.
(v.) rendering evil for good.

For I said,—Lest they [r]rejoice over me:
when my foot [s]slippeth, they magnify themselves against me.
For I am [t]ready to halt,
and my sorrow is before me continually.
For I [u]declare mine iniquity:
I am [v]alarmed for my sin.
But mine [w]enemies are lively; they are strong:
and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied.
And they that [x]render evil for good are adversaries to me,
[y]because of my following that which is good.

5 (21, 22): The appeal to divine government.
(i.) Jehovah my God!
(ii.) my salvation.

[z]Forsake me not, Jehovah!
my God, be not far from me!
[a]Hasten to my help,
O Lord, my [b]salvation!

o cf. 1 Pet. 2. 23. *cf.* Mat. 5. 38–41.
p Ps. 25. 2. *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 19.
q cf. Lk. 18. 1–8. Ps. 13. 3–6.
r Ps. 30. 1. Ps. 35. 19, 24.
s cf. Prov. 24. 16. *cf.* Mi. 7. 8. *ctr.* Ps. 94. 18.
t cf. Ps. 73. 2. *cf.* Isa. 40. 28–31.
u Ps. 25. 11. Ps. 32. 5.
v cf. Acts 2. 37. *cf.* Acts 6. 26–30.
w Ps. 27. 2, etc.
x cf. Ps. 109. 3–5. *cf.* Mat. 5. 10–12.
y Ps. 35. 12–16; *cf.* Jer. 18. 20, 21; *cf.* Jno. 15. 18–25. *z* Ps. 27. 9, 10. *a* Ps. 141. 1; *cf.* Jno. 11. 6. *b* Ps. 32. 7; Isa. 12. 2.

ness is transparent. But he has left all to God, in whom he anchors himself and is at rest. God shall answer for him.

4. But to Him he can speak therefore, and put it all before Him: and accordingly we find now the trial so put, but more the external part of it, the worst having found relief. First, the attitude of the enemies, ready to use every slip of his to exalt themselves by it. Himself too, so conscious of his readiness to halt, humbled and discouraged by his failure, the reality of his sin which he could not hide, and at which his soul trembled. And that which had abased and cast him down had strengthened and multiplied too his enemies, who persecuted him in fact, not for the failure which he confessed, but for the good which, spite of the failure, he had really followed. Common enough, we all know, is such conduct on the part of those who would fain hide under a cloak of righteousness what is mere hatred of righteousness itself! But how bitter then to the soul those sins of the righteous which give them their desired opportunity! But they use these to their own ruin, while God uses them to the humbling of His people, that He may come in for them.

5. So the psalmist turns to Him once more. The unerring government of God will make no mistake. He knows, after all, those who own Him God, their God; who cling in the consciousness of weakness and worthlessness to Him as Saviour. Their sins cannot make their need of Him less as that, nor change the Unchangeable, who, undeceived from the beginning, and for no good in them, has taken such place of relationship toward them. So the cry that ends the psalm has in it these tokens—so simple as they are—of answer and acceptance, "Jehovah my God"; "Lord, my salvation"! He who can cry from the heart thus will certainly find God no less than his faith accounts Him.

Psalm XXXIX.

The closing psalm of this threefold series is most general in its character. It shows us sin as the cause, under divine government, of the frailty and vanity of human life; and the heart of the righteous, exercised by this, coming to realize and acquiesce in it with all its humiliation. Thus, spite of its gloomy theme, it is for Jeduthun, the "praise-giver," that the psalm is appointed, and this is so according to rule that all the strangeness has passed out of it.

Ps. xxxix.

[5]PSALM XXXIX.

Man's frailty seen in the light of divine government.

To the chief musician, to [c]Jeduthun: a psalm of David.

(i.) the resolve.

I SAID: I will take [d]heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue;
I will [e]keep my mouth with a muzzle, while the [f]wicked is before me.

(ii.) the conflict.

I was dumb in silence; I held my peace [even] from [g]good:
and my sorrow was stirred.

(iii.) the heart utters itself.

My heart was [h]hot within me:
while I mused, the fire kindled—
I spake with my tongue:

(iv.) asking to know its frailty.

Jehovah! make me know mine [i]end,
and the measure of my days, what it is:
that I may know how [j]frail I am.

(v.) the weak with the strong.

Lo, thou hast made my days [but] [k]handbreadths,
and my short space * is as nothing before thee:
surely, every man, the [most] stable, is but a [l]breath. Selah.

(vi.) the evil of the limit.

Surely, man walketh in [m]unreality; †
surely, they are [n]disquieted in vain:
he [o]heapeth up [treasures], and knoweth not who shall gather them.

* *Cheled*, "transitoriness." † *Tzelem*, "image."

[c] 1 Chr. 25.1. Ps. 62, title. Ps. 77, title.
[d] Ps. 141.3,4.
[e] Ps. 34. 13.
[f] *cf.* Col. 4. 4, 5. *cf.* Lk. 11. 54.
[g] *ctr.* 1 Pet. 3. 15.
[h] Job 32. 18–20. Jer. 20. 9. *cf.* Acts 4. 19, 20.
[i] Ps. 90. 12. Ps. 119. 84. *cf.* Lk. 12. 13–21. Jas. 4. 13–15.
[j] Ps. 146. 3,4. Isa. 2. 22.
[k] Ps. 90. 5,9, 10. Job 7. 6–10. Job 9. 25. *cf.* Ps. 102. 11, 23 with Jno. 14. 19.
[l] ver. 11. Ps. 62. 9.
[m] Ps. 144. 4. 1 Chr. 29. 15.
[n] *cf.* Mat. 6. 19–34. Ps. 127. 1,2.
[o] Ps. 49. 10. *cf.* Eccl. 2. 18–26.

The psalm divides naturally into two parts, the first of which is an Ecclesiastes dirge over the misery of man's "short space," while the second gives the judgment of its cause, the recognition of God's chastening because of sin, and that His "looking away" from man is his only hope. This, of course, is a very partial view of things; but the exclusion of the evangelic treatment of this—of which the psalmist, as we have seen, cannot be thought so ignorant as might appear—only brings more prominently into sight the matter which occupies him, which is, in fact, the evil and not the good; although it be true, and what is sought in it, that the complete judgment of the evil is itself a good, and allows the ever-ready grace to come freely in. The next psalm returns to Christ, and to His work of propitiation.

1. The sorrow into which he is plunged provokes the psalmist to thoughts that are so full of question, that in the presence of the wicked, ever fretting against God, he is afraid to utter them for fear of sin. He muzzles himself, therefore, and is dumb, even as to good, for he dare not trust himself. But the fire in his heart breaks out at last, and he cannot refrain. He speaks, but to the Lord alone.

He cries, then, to know his end, his days that are measured, and yet he knows not the measure. Alarmed at his frailty, he is alarmed also at how little he realizes his frailty. His days are handbreadths merely, and God has given them their limit, a short space which is really nothing before the Eternal. It is the common condition of man: take the most stable, what is he? a puff of air—a breath.

Then the unreality this gives to things, even while they last! vain disquietude; vain heaping up of what has presently to be left to others, he knows not whom. This is a trite story; but we are too certainly actors in it to allow its triteness to abate its interest for us.

2 (7-13): The judgment as to it.
(i.) the Source of hope.
(ii.) to whom faith looks for deliverance.
(iii.) in the presence of God.
(iv.) prostrate.
(v.) the chastening of God.
(vi.) the limit pleaded
(vii.) complete recognition.

And now, Lord, what [p] wait I for?
my [q] hope is in thee.
Deliver me from all [r] my revoltings:
make me not the [s] reproach of the fool.
I was [t] dumb, I opened not my mouth:
because [u] thou didst it.
Remove thy stroke from off me:
by the blow of thy hand I am [v] consumed.
When thou with rebukes dost [w] correct man for perversity,
thou makest his [x] beauty dissolve like the moth:
surely, every man is breath. Selah.
Hear my [y] prayer, Jehovah:
and give ear unto my cry!
hold not thy peace at my [z] tears!
for I am a [a] stranger with thee:
a sojourner like all my [b] fathers.
Look [c] away from me, that I may recover strength,
before I go hence, and be [d] no more.

p Gen. 49. 18.
q Ps. 38. 15. Lam. 3. 24. *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 1.
r Ps. 25. 7, 11, 18. Ps. 103. 9, 10.
s *cf.* Deut. 28. 37. Ps. 44. 13. Ps. 123. 3, 4. *cf.* Lam. 1. 21.
t Ps. 38. 13. ver. 2. Lam. 2. 10.
u Job 1. 21 Heb. 12. 6-11.
v Ps. 90. 7. Lam. 2. 1-5.
w Ps. 6. 1. Ps. 94. 12.
x Ps. 32. 3, 4. Isa. 51. 8. *cf.* Lam. 4. 7, 8.
y Ps. 17. 1.
z Ps. 42. 3; Ps. 80. 5.
a Job 14. 1, 2; Lev. 25. 23; 1 Pet. 2. 11.
b Gen. 47. 9; Heb. 11. 9, 10, 13-16.
c Ps. 130. 3; Ps. 143. 2.
d Job 7. 7-10; Job 14. 10-12; Ps. 103. 15, 16; *ctr.* 2 Cor. 5. 1 with 2 Tim. 1. 10.

2. He turns once more to the Lord, to express the hope he has in Him. He has no expectation elsewhere; but here at once the remembrance of his sins confronts him; he needs deliverance from these: he prays that on this account he may not be made the reproach of the fool—the impious—with whom, spite of all, he is not. Couscious of the chastening hand upon him, he was dumb, his mouth stopped, for he could not open it against God. Yet he can make supplication for the removal of the stroke, the blow of His hand under which he is being consumed. And such is man's condition: his beauty ephemeral as the moth, but as the correction of perversity: for, with his Father's goods on his hand, he uses them to enjoy himself away from Him, and thus must find the famine in order to be brought back. Every man is therefore but a breath.

Now he breaks out into prayer again, turning his condition into an argument for the pity of the Merciful One. A "stranger" had careful provision made for him in Israel; and a "sojourner," like David's Moabitish ancestress, could reckon upon the shelter of the wings of the God of Israel. "I," too, he cries, "am a stranger with Thee, and a sojourner, like all my fathers." A stranger and sojourner is the guest of God, and to prove the largeness of His hospitality.

But he goes further than this, and in a prayer that seems at first to be contradictory to it. "Look *away* from me," he says, "that I may recover strength," (or, more literally, "brighten up,") "before I go hence and be no more." But why "look away"? Certainly not that he wants God to forget him, but the contrary; but he is conscious of his sinfulness, which is the cause of all the sorrow and evil of his life; if a holy God is to look at *that*, what hope can there be for him? Surely none; and he and sin are so identified, God must look away from *him*—must not regard him—that he may have peace or comfort at all. The psalmist can elsewhere supplement this thought with what is necessary to explain it rightly. He can say, "Look upon the face of Thine Anointed"—Thy Christ (Ps. lxxxiv. 9); and thus it is that, according to the gospel paradox, God can regard us, just as *not* regarding us. Here, as already said, it is the very purpose of the psalm to give expression to the sense of the evil in us: we shall have no difficulty in fitting to it then the compensating and glorious truth. Repentance and faith are but the opposite sides of all real conversion. With the back on self, the glory of Christ is ever manifest.

Sec. 2.

The first book closes with two psalms which are in emphatic contrast with one another; the second containing in itself also a contrast of very significant character, a most fitting close to those counsels of God as to Christ which the first book has so largely for its theme. Such contrasts, when really, as in the present case, complementary to one another, are contained in all competent witness, and necessary to it; and the two psalms here become thus an inspired *nota bene*,—a moral to which our attention is called, and worthy of the deepest possible consideration.

As a third section of the third subdivision of the book, these psalms lead us into the holy of holies,—the sanctuary of the divine thought. And in the fortieth psalm it surely is so. We have here the heart of Christ laid bare to us, the ark of the covenant opened, and the foundations of the throne of God among men, as a veritable "mercy-seat," discovered. "Thy law," says the One coming forward to take up His predestined path of suffering to maintain it,—"Thy law is within my heart." Thus the meaning of sacrifice becomes apparent also, just where Israel's shadows fade away; that which God could have no delight in being replaced by that which is now His complete satisfaction,—which has in it therefore the savor of eternal rest and the assurance of perfect blessing. As the twenty-second psalm is that of the sin-offering, as we have seen, and the sixty-ninth, as we shall see, if the Lord will, hereafter, is that of the trespass-offering, so here we have plainly the burnt-offering,—that which, tried fully by the fire of divine holiness, has nothing in it but sweet savor, and *all* goes up to God therefore as such. The number of the psalm, as that of perfect trial, may have to do with this, even though it is but seldom that in the whole series of the Psalms, the separate numbers shine out as this does. They may yet do so, if the Lord give competency to interpret the higher arithmetic involved. We shall not, however, prophesy as to this, but simply call attention to its suitability in this case.

The forty-first psalm, as already said, is in entire contrast with the preceding one. Here the heart of man is opened to us indeed, but it is not that of the perfect Man, but of men, either conscious of their need, and turning to Him whose grace alone can meet it, or else hardened and ignorant, and misinterpreting what grace has done. The perfect Man is, however, in this psalm also, but in a guise which to unbelief is sure to be a stumbling-block,—a guise which faith alone can penetrate. And it is not an arbitrary decree which has made it so: it is a necessary result of man's false judgment of himself. Repentance and faith go necessarily together: only the lost soul needs and finds the Saviour of the lost.

Psalm XL.

The fortieth psalm has plainly for its theme that one perfect obedience of the Man, Christ Jesus, which sets aside and replaces all the sacrifices of the law,—is therefore that in which the believer finds acceptance before God, the obedience whereby many are made righteous. And this, though essentially what all offerings speak, is what the burnt-offering explicitly brings before us. The sin-offering shows the place of distance and wrath from God necessitated by the holiness of God, if atonement is to be wrought by it. The trespass-offering presents the thought of restitution, the amends made by it to the government of God. The peace-offering dwells upon the effect, the breach repaired, peace made, communion with God enjoyed. But the *burnt*-offering alone exhibits the voluntariness of the offering, the perfection of the sacrifice in its inner reality, the full trial according to divine holiness, the Offerer being in view as well as the offering, and the sweet savor resulting. It is thus the offering which fulfills the purpose of the altar, and gives it its character as the "altar of burnt-offering," being indeed that which goes up to God continually upon it.

1. The psalm divides into two parts, the first of which gives us the blessed obedience itself; the second, the contrasted consequences for friends and enemies:

Ps. xl.

SEC. 3. (Ps. xl., xli.)

The manifestation of the heart of Christ, and the hearts of men.

[1]PSALM XL.

The one obedience by which many are made righteous.

To the chief musician: a psalm of David.

1 (1-12): The obedience.
a (1-5): Divine faithfulness and sufficiency.
(i.) endurance.
(ii.) deliverance.
(iii.) worship.
(iv.) the experience resulting.

I [e]WAITED patiently for Jehovah:
and he inclined unto me, and [f]heard my cry.
And he [g]brought me up out of the [h]pit of destruction,
out of the [i]miry clay,
and set my feet upon a [j]rock, [and] established my [k]goings.
And he put a new [l]song into my mouth,
praise to our God.
[m]Many shall see it, and fear, and [n]trust in Jehovah.
[o]Happy the man that maketh Jehovah his trust,
and [p]respecteth not the proud, nor those who turn [q]aside to lies!

e *cf.* Jno. 10. 18 with 1 Pet. i. 21.
f Ps. 116.1,2. *cf.* Heb. 5. 7, 8.
g Ps. 22. 21. *cf.* Acts 2. 24. *cf.* Heb. 13. 20.
h *cf.* Ps. 69. 15. *cf.* Ps. 28.1. *cf.* Isa.53.5.
i *cf.* Ps. 69. 2, 14 with 2 Cor. 5. 21.
j *cf.* Gen. 8.4 with Rom. 6. 9, 10. *cf.* Rev. 1. 18.
k *cf.* Lev. 14. 7. *cf.* Gen. 49. 21 with Acts 1. 9.
l *cf.* Ps. 22. 22–25.

m Ps. 22. 26; *cf.* Jno. 20. 9, 20; *cf.* Lk. 24. 25–33. *n* Ps. 2. 12. *o* *cf.* Ps. 16. 1, 8–11. *p* *cf.* Ps. 16. 4. *q* *cf.* Ex. 32. 7, 8; Josh 23. 6.

the world being thus indeed divided necessarily by the reception or rejection of that which in its own intent is peace to all. This is seen also in the psalm that follows, as already noted, but in a different manner, as will be realized on taking them up.

(*a*) The first section gives us, according to what we have seen to be so commonly the manner in the Psalms, the deliverance out of the sorrows which the rest of the psalm then takes up and describes. Jehovah's faithfulness and sufficiency are here the theme: manifested in answer to the patient endurance of One who has been in the very "pit of destruction," but to be delivered out of it necessarily by this very faithfulness. He leaves his case wholly in Jehovah's hands. All is to be determined by Him, and thus effectually and forever.

Self-deliverance is indeed impossible for any beside Himself, in this place into which He has come. The "miry clay" would prevent any effort of this kind being effectual. But this patient Sufferer meditates no escape. The deliverance being of God, will be for the bringing of many to the blessedness of confidence in Jehovah, and to delight in His wondrous ways. "We believe," says the apostle, "on Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead: who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 24, 25). This resurrection of Christ identifies God with this suffering Saviour, and bears witness to the salvation as complete and accepted. Where those blessed feet have found the "rock," the feet of every poor sinner may find it now. His resurrection is the clearing from guilt of all those whose sins He bore, and has borne away. He is in heaven, all the shadow passed from His blessed face, and the glory of God shining there instead. What a "gospel" is this "glory of Christ"* for one who apprehends its meaning!

And thus the song of the Risen One is truly a "new song" begun: the song of accomplished redemption,—of God able to tell out all His heart; and having told it out, awaking the eternal echoes with His praise; "many shall see it and fear, and put their trust in Jehovah." Now, how blessed is the man that does so! And how blessed will be his portion in those dark days of prophecy which the Psalms continually look on to, when "the proud and those who turn aside to lies" will be found on every side! the days of Antichrist, "the liar" (1 John ii. 22), and of the "strong delusion" to be sent on those who "believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. ii. 11, 12).

* As 2 Cor. iv. 4 should be translated. The translators have rendered it as a mere Hebraism, "glorious gospel," instead of "gospel of the glory," as the Revised Version rightly gives it.

(v.) wonder of the divine ways.

Many, Jehovah my God, are the [r]wonderful works thou hast done,
and thy [s]thoughts toward us:
they cannot be set in order unto thee;
if I would declare and speak [of them],
they are [s]more than can be numbered.

b (6-10): Service and testimony. (i.) unique obedience.

[u]Sacrifice and offering thou hadst no delight in:
[v]ears hast thou digged for me:
[w]burnt-offering and [x]sin-offering thou hast not demanded.

r Ps. 92. 5. *cf.* Ps. 8. 3. *cf.* Ps. 46. 8, 9. *cf.* Ex. 14. 29-31.
s Isa. 55. 8, 9. *cf.* Eph. 1. 4-11. *cf.* Rom. 11. 33-36.
t Ps. 139. 17.
u Heb. 10. 5-10. *cf.* Ps. 51. 16, 17. *cf.* Heb. 9.
w *cf.* Lev. 1. 3

9-14. *v cf.* Ex. 21. 1-6; *cf.* Heb. 10. 5 with Luke 1. 35; *cf.* 1 Pet. 2. 24. with Eph. 5. 2. *x cf.* Lev. 4. 3, etc., with Heb. 13. 11, 12.

This section ends with the joyful ascription to God of wondrous works, and gracious "thoughts to us-ward," quite beyond utterance. It reminds us of John's similar declaration as to the works of Christ, which, "were they all written every one, even the world would not contain the books that should be written." Suitable, indeed, to awaken such thoughts, that interposition in behalf of men which both the psalmist and the evangelist have before them. It is the theme of eternity, and time is all too narrow for it.

(*b*) We now go back to see the path that led into these depths, and the principle which carried Him on and sustained Him in it to the end. We find it is a path of service and testimony to God, which reminds us of the characteristic bullock of the burnt-offering. The ox we know to be the type of the patient laborer (1 Cor. ix. 9, 10). And here first we have that reference to the sacrificial offerings, the true meaning of which is so perfectly in contrast with that given it by so many of the blind critics of the day, who see in it the disclaiming of the divine institution of sacrifice in Israel. Leave out Christ indeed out of the passage,—make it simply David, or some nameless Maccabean writer, or any one else you please,—then the consequences of this unbelief will naturally follow, and darkness result from leaving out the light. But we may well take the apostle's application, with the consistent unity which the whole psalm gains by it, as a sufficient justification for the omission of all the reasoning on that side. It is true that the One personated by the psalmist here *does* represent Jehovah as having no delight in "sacrifice and offering"; but it is because He has in view, not the fragmentary and spotted obedience of any ordinary man, but the glorious Antitype of these sacrifices, who could say in a sense no other could, "ears hast Thou digged for Me," and anticipate thus the time when "burnt-offering and sin-offering" would be no more required. To put the past for the future is the common style of Old Testament prophecy; and the preceding "ears hast Thou digged for Me" is of course as much a past of this kind as is that which follows it.

The apostle accepts the reading (or interpretation) of the Septuagint, "A body hast Thou prepared Me," as at least the fair equivalent of the Hebrew here. The "ears digged" are to hear the divine Word; the "body prepared" is to do service with. In either case it is the perfect humanity that is before us of One in whom was no taint of evil, and no consequence of sin inherent. The reference in the Hebrew seems not to be to the bored ear of perpetual service, as in Exod. xxi.; although it *is* Christ that is typified there, surely, and the line of truth is here so remarkably akin. But the expression is not the same in this case, and we have the plural and not the singular, while "a body hast Thou prepared Me" could not be derived from, or given as the rendering of, such an expression as this. It is generally agreed therefore that "ears hast Thou digged for Me" speaks in fact of creative gift. And yet it is surely true that this perfect humanity, this body prepared, is in fact the sign of a service which is not taken to be given up again. *Man* the Lord is still; and Man He will ever be. And this truth conveys to our hearts the precious assurance of His desire to be

(ii.) as written.

(iii.) the innermost heart.

(iv.) the public testimony.

(v.) testimony to Jehovah's ways.

Then said I, Lo, [y]I am come:
in the [z]roll of the book it is written of me.
I [a]delight to do thy pleasure, my God:
yea, thy law is [b]within my heart.
I have [c]preached righteousness in the great congregation:
lo, I have not withheld my lips,
Jehovah, [d]*thou* knowest.
I have not [e]hid thy righteousness within my heart;
I have declared thy [f]faithfulness and thy [g]salvation:
I have not hid thy loving-kindness and thy truth
from the [h]great congregation.

y *cf.* Matt. 3. 16, 17. *cf.* Jno. 1. 29.
z Lk. 24. 27, 44–46. Acts 17. 3, 11.
a *cf.* Jno. 4. 31–34. *cf.* Jno. 10. 17, 18 with Lev. 1. 9.
b *cf.* Deu. 10. 1–5. Ps. 1. 2.
c *cf.* Jno. 7. 27, 28, 37, 38. Ps. 22. 25.
d *cf.* Jno. 17. 4–6. *e ctr.* Ps. 39. 2. *f cf.* Jno. 11. 41, 42; *cf.* Jno. 17. 26. *g cf.* Jno. 5. 24; *cf.* Jno. 20. 19, 20; *cf.* Lk. 24. 46, 47. *h* ver. 9.

near us, with us, and to serve us still. Thus this difference seems after all to be scarcely in result a difference.

The ears are digged, the body is prepared: He then presents Himself for the accomplishment of the divine purpose, according to all that Scripture had foreshown of Him. The point of time—"*then* said I"—can only be, as the context shows, after manhood has been assumed. The words spoken also show this: not, as in the common version, "Lo, I come," but, as in the revised, "Lo, I *am* come."* He is already in the world, in the scene in which the purpose of God is to be fulfilled by Him, and signifies thus that He takes up His mission. The words that follow do not, I believe, refer to the book of divine counsels for eternity, (counsels which, however, are sufficiently declared by them,) but to the volume of inspiration which He opens for us: "in the volume of the book," He says, "it is written of ME." That is, "This very institution of sacrifice, in which, in the mere ceremonial fulfillment of it, Thou couldst have no delight,—this is written of *Me:* I am the One to whom it looked forward; my work is its true fulfillment."

This surely completes the thought as to the insufficiency, and now the abrogation, of these legal sacrifices, while it puts honor upon them by showing their divine end. A most important statement it is, and from lips so manifestly inspired of God, that this law of sacrifice was *written with regard to Christ!* And this links with the next verse as plainly: "I delight to do Thy pleasure, My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." No doubt, this cannot be confined to the law of sacrifice; and yet it shows, as connected with what has gone before, what in fact the will of God which He came to do has specially in contemplation here: as the apostle applies it, "By the which will we are sanctified through the *offering of the body* of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. x. 10).

How this declares the way in which the Lord yielded Himself to the will of God as witnessed in Scripture! showing us at once the Author of those ritual observances held by many now in such dishonor, while at the same time giving them their true significance and power. It is the same glorious Person of whom we read in the gospels, saying to His disciples, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer," and then, "after they had sung a hymn," going forth to that suffering by which the passover was to be fulfilled.

His public testimony corresponded with this inmost desire of His heart. Spite of the pressure of evil, righteousness in Him uttered itself aloud, and the world hated Him because He bare testimony of it that its deeds were evil. "I have preached righteousness," He says, "in the great congregation: lo, I have not withheld my lips, Jehovah, Thou knowest."

But most of all, it was to God He bare witness. "I have not hid *Thy* righteousness within my heart; I have declared Thy faithfulness and Thy salva-

* *Bathi;* in the Septuagint and the Epistle to the Hebrews, ἥκω, not ἔρχομαι.

c (11-12): The realization.

(i.) appeals to Jehovah's faithfulness.

(ii.) the bearer of sins.

Withhold not thou, Jehovah, thy [i]tender mercies from me!
thy loving-kindness and thy truth continually shall [j]preserve me.
For [k]innumerable evils press on me:
[l]mine iniquities have taken hold on me, so that I cannot [m]look [up];
they are more than the [n]hairs of my head, and my heart hath [o]failed me.

2 (13-17): Contrasted consequences

(i.) a cry to the Unchangeable.

(ii.) the defeat of enemies.

(iii.) they shall realize their shame.

(iv.) the test of experience.

Be [p]pleased, Jehovah, to deliver me!
[q]hasten, Jehovah, to my help!
They shall be [r]ashamed and confounded together, that seek after my soul to destroy it!
they shall be driven [s]backward and put to dishonor that delight in my harm.
They shall be [t]desolate on account of their shame, that say unto me, [u]Aha! aha!
All those that [v]seek thee shall be joyful and glad in thee:
those that [w]love thy salvation, shall say continually, Jehovah be [x]magnified.

i cf. Heb. 5. 7, 8.
j cf. Ps. 16.1. *cf.* Lk. 23. 46.
k cf. Lk. 22. 42–44.
l cf. Ps. 41. 4 with 2 Cor. 5. 21.
m cf. Mk.15. 33, 34. Ps. 69. 3.
n cf. Is. 1. 18 with 1 Jno. 1. 7.
o Ps. 22. 14. *cf.* 2 Cor. 13. 4.
p Ps.70.1,etc
q Ps. 22. 19.
r Ps. 35. 4. *cf.* Ps. 69. 22–28.
s cf. Jno. 18. 6 with Lk. 23. 34.
t cf. Ps. 109. 5–20.
u cf. Mk.15. 29–32.
v cf. Ps. 69.6. *cf.* Ps. 22.3.
w cf. ver.10.
x Ps. 35. 27.

tion: I have not hid Thy righteousness and Thy truth from the great congregation." Such was He then for whom man decreed as His reward the cross; and for whom God's good pleasure meant also the cross! God and man strangely at one in this, with yet most opposite thoughts and purposes; while He, with perfect consciousness of it all, moved onward toward the place which Satan alone—and he, with the knowledge which men had not, of His personal glory—would have forbidden Him!

(*c*) Behold Him then in the "pit of destruction"! there where innumerable evils press upon Him, and that as the righteous wrath of God upon iniquities as innumerable! He is suffering for that which, as He apprehends it, lying with its hideous shadow over Him, its awful weight pressing Him down, makes His heart fail, and His eyes unable to look up. These iniquities He confesses as His own, while yet He can appeal, not only to God's "loving-kindness," but to His "truth," to deliver Him. We can understand this of the Sin-bearer alone. The two verses that come together in this section of the psalm are both needful in order to explain the character of what is here. It is One of whom indeed the Levitical law of sacrifice was written; whose perfect obedience in the sinner's place sets it aside by complete and glorious fulfillment once for all. The salvation of which He had testified is here wrought out; God glorified, sin utterly condemned, in that which in the place of utter abandonment brings in the testimony to His righteousness and love. Righteousness and love can therefore come in in answer, and in behalf of those for whom this sacrifice is offered.

2. The second part of the psalm presents the contrasted consequences of this glorious work, according as men accept or are found in hostility towards it. The repetition of this part, with very slight changes, as an independent psalm (Ps. lxx.), will be better considered when we shall have reached it; but it was to be expected that the fact of this repetition should awaken conjecture, as it has done. But all is so perfectly in place, that there is not the least need to concern ourselves about it. *There* it follows the trespass-offering psalm, as here it forms the last part of the psalm of burnt-offering,—occupying thus an analogous place in regard to the corresponding view of the Lord's work, and answering to the last ten verses of the sin-offering psalm (the twenty-second).

We have here first the cry to Jehovah, the Unchangeable, the appeal being to

(v.) the weak with the strong.

But I am [y]poor and needy, [yet] the Lord [z]thinketh upon me:
thou art my [a]help and my deliverer;
make no [b]tarrying, O my God!

Ps. xli.

[2]PSALM XLI.

The cross as seen by faith and by unbelief.

To the chief musician: a psalm of David.

1 (1-3): The knowledge that is peace with God. (i.) Jehovah's sufficiency. (ii.) Deliverance from enemies.

[c]HAPPY is he who understandeth as to the [d]weakened one:
in the evil day Jehovah will [e]deliver him.
Jehovah will preserve him, and keep him alive:
and he shall be made happy in the land;
and thou wilt not give him up to the will of his [f]enemies.

y cf. Ps. 41.1 with 2 Cor. 8. 9.
z cf. Phil. 2. 9.
a cf. Acts 3. 13.
b ver. 13.
c cf. Ps. 32.1. *cf.* Ps. 1. 1.
d cf. Ps. 40. 17. *cf.* Ps 69.29. *cf.* Ps. 102. 23. *cf.* Ps. 109. 22 with 2 Cor. 8. 9. 2 Cor. 13. 4.
e Ps. 7. 1. Ps. 34. 4,17. *cf.* Mk. 13. 19, 20.
f cf. Ps. 13. 3, 4. Ps. 27. 2, 3.

His faithfulness as such, as we have seen before. Thereupon the Speaker realizes the confusion of His enemies, and sees the utter shame of those that mock at Him. On the contrary, those that seek God shall be joyful in Him, and those that love His salvation glorify His Name. He is poor and needy, yet the Lord hath regard to Him; and He concludes with a confident appeal for speedy deliverance.

Psalm XLI.

The first book closes now with the double view of the Cross, as seen by faith or by unbelief, with the occasion and the true ground of the latter. The work is accepted of God, who raises up the Worker, and sets Him before His face forever, while faith finds in it that which brings help and deliverance in every kind of trial and evil. The book ends with the ascription of praise, as the numerical structure indicates, from all the earth.

The psalm has three parts essentially; the fourth being but the praise with which all ends. The first part gives us the blessedness of the knowledge of that Poor Man, whose poverty makes many rich. Only with such an application can we see the true significance of this blessedness. To make it the recompense of mere benevolence, as is the common thought, would be not merely unevangelic, but render the body of the psalm wholly unintelligible. The Lord's own application of the ninth verse to Judas (Jno. xiii. 18) would seem almost, at first sight, to necessitate that of the Speaker to Christ Himself. But the fourth verse, on the other hand, seems just as plainly to forbid this. How could *He* say, as the psalmist does, "Heal my soul; for I have sinned against Thee"? But the subject of the psalm, as even the first verse shows, implies a mystery. There is something which needs an understanding heart, and that something concerns in some way the "poor man," to whom we may then naturally expect our attention to be directed. Faith penetrates the mystery, and finds unspeakable blessing. Unbelief reads it in quite another way, and its recompense is in correspondence with this, an opposite one.

This word "poor," although a possible rendering of the Hebrew, is not the only one possible, nor (I believe) its significance in this case. The meaning of the original is "swinging, waving to and fro," hence "wavering, weak, exhausted," and thus may be used as synonymous with "poor;" but this weakness may, of course, be produced in a very different way,—as by injury or by sickness; and here the enigma of the psalm begins. "Weakened" the Sufferer is, but from what cause? Look on to the fourth verse, and his own words seem to make it still more equivocal: "I said, Jehovah, be favorable unto me: heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee." Indeed, this seems more than equivocal: healing must, no doubt, be as needful in the case of "bruising" as of disease;

(iii.) Inward refreshment.

Jehovah will [g]sustain him on a bed of languishing:
thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.

2 (4-9): The enmity of unbelief.

(i.) the occasion of unbelief.

I said, Jehovah, be favorable to me:
[h]heal my soul; for I have [i]sinned toward thee.*

(ii.) the enmity.

Mine [j]enemies speak evil of me:
when will he die, and his [k]name perish?

(iii.) the heart manifested.

And if he come to see me, he speaketh [l]deceit:
his heart gathereth falsehood to itself;
[when] he goeth without, he [m]speaketh [it.]

*Gen. xliv. 32: *chatathi lo.*

g Ps. 55. 22. *cf.* 2 Cor. 7. 5, 7.
h cf. Ps. 103. 3 with Isa. 53. 4-7.
i cf. 1 John 3. 5 with 1 Pet. 2. 22-24.
j Ps. 22. 6, 7. Ps. 69. 10-12.
k cfr. Phil. 2. 9-11.
l Ps. 55. 21.
m cf. Lk. 22 3-6.

but how explain of the Sinless One, "I have sinned against Thee"? Strong as the expression is, even this is not decisive; and, if we cannot easily accept it as suitable from the lips of the Substitute for sinners, Bishop Horsley has well reminded us that the same word exactly is used by Judah, in the book of Genesis, where we must unquestionably render it, as the common version does, "bear the blame" or "sin" (Gen. xliv. 32).

The words, then, may be equivocal, and designedly so, and yet all the more suit the application to the Lord here. For here is just the mystery which faith is called to penetrate. Granted that this suffering implies sin, and is owned to do so, yet is it "in," or only "on," the One who suffers? Think of the darkness on the Cross, and the awful cry that God had forsaken Him,—the *seeming* justification of the accusations of His enemies! How natural to the heart, ignorant of its need, to say, "A thing of Belial cleaves to him," which the common version renders, "an evil disease": unbelief so interpreting this "heal my soul"; while faith, adoring, sees the atoning sacrifice!

Thus, then, the meaning of the psalm emerges, completely in accordance with its connection with the preceding one, and its place at the conclusion of the book. It is the *moral* conclusion: unbelief the result of hostility in heart to Him who has in the very revelation of God to man, revealed him to himself. Thus "Me the world hateth," He says, "because I bear witness of it, that its deeds are evil." Unbelief is the issue of unrepentance, and fatally misinterprets all the divine ways. Grace is an offense to it; the humiliation of Christ a stumbling-stone; the cross an inconceivable requirement on God's part: the whole mystery of "God manifest in flesh" is utterly rejected.

1. "He weakened my strength in my journey," says the Sufferer of the 102d psalm; "He shortened my days." Yet this is He who of old laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of His hands. They, therefore, may pass, but He remaineth (comp. Heb. i. 10–12). We can realize, therefore, the happiness of the man who understandeth as to the Weakened One. It is the clear sight of faith which discerns the glory of Christ under the veil of His sufferings: therefore "in the evil day Jehovah will deliver him." Whatever the character of the evil, grace will manifest its sufficiency. Enemies, though there may be many in a hostile world, cannot prevail against him: "Jehovah will preserve him, and keep him alive; and Thou wilt not give him up to the will of his enemies." Be the attack from within, and upon the forces of life, "Jehovah will sustain him on the bed of languishing: Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness."

2. These, then, are blessings attendant upon faith, though in their character as here given, they have the external aspect so marked in the Old Testament. The psalm, then—though the Speaker may be the same—takes voice as the utterance evidently of the Weakened One Himself,—faith's mysterious object. And here is the text with all its mystery, upon which unbelief now comments after its own manner: "I said, Jehovah, be favorable to me: heal my soul, for I have sinned [or, borne sin] toward Thee." There is the mystery: "sinned," "borne sin,"—which is it? And this is that which the heart-stricken cry upon

(iv.) the ways.

(v.) the imputation of the ways of God.

(vi.) the full height of the evil.

All they that hate me [n]whisper together against me:
against me they [o]devise evil for me.
"A [p]thing of Belial," [say they,] "cleaveth to him fast;
and now that he lieth, he shall [q]rise no more."
Yea, mine own [r]familiar friend, in whom I trusted,
who did [s]eat of my bread,
hath lifted up his [t]heel against me.

n Ps.142.3,4. *o cf.* Mt. 26. 3-5. *p cf.* Ps. 69. 26. *cf.* Ps. 71. 10, 11 with Isa. 52. 14. Isa. 53. 2-5. *q cf.* Mt. 27. 62-66. *r* Ps. 55. 12-14;

cf. 2 Sam. 16. 22. *s* Jno. 13. 18, 26-30; *cf.* Matt. 26. 21-25. *t cf.* Ps. 109. 5-8 with Acts 1. 20; *cf.* Lk. 22. 3-6.

the cross involves. Even now, multitudes of even true believers have never realized its true meaning. Was that forsaking simply His being given up to death? was that the unequaled sorrow,—unequaled only because of the glory of Him who endured it? Here that very glory which faith discerns in Him, seems as if it had blinded it to the depths into which He must descend. In the darkness over the cross at mid-day, they see not the outward expression of the Light of light withdrawn, but nature's sympathy with the dying Saviour. They talk of "equivalent penalty"; nay, of "substitute for penalty;" and of His death as but the "close of His life-work." From this descent has been made through every possible phase of unbelief to the complete denial of atonement, in any true sense of the word. But we will not follow this now: look back only at the sin-offering (Lev. iv.-v. 13), and see how great may be the "poverty" of apprehension, to which God has been pleased yet to come down, because in the Christ that faith confesses there is a divine sufficiency, where the apprehension of the work itself is yet all-*in*sufficient.

But we turn to look back at the awful enmity of his maddened adversaries. "Mine enemies speak evil of me: When will he die, and his name perish?" True it is, they are strangers to His glorious Name, or they could not ask such a question. As the apostle says, "Whom none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory" (1 Cor. ii. 8). Of course: they would not have *dared*. None the less had they seen in Christ the image of God, and seen it to hate it only. He who hates goodness hates of necessity the God of all goodness, and yet may not know that it is God he hates. Thus Christ in the world tested the world, and "the world knew Him not" (John i. 10); and yet "light had come into the world, and men *loved* darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (iii. 19). Thus, in either way, the story may be truly told; and in either way be the *same* story: for evil knows not good,—cannot fathom it, or believe in it; "the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not" (i. 5). Faith in the light is only coincident with a new birth—a new nature.

In the next verse the hypocrisy that links itself with this real enmity is manifest: "And if he come to see me, he speaketh deceit: his heart gathereth falsehood to itself; when he goeth without, he speaketh it." Thus he finds just what he looks for; his heart is a magnet that, by a terrible principle of natural selection, attracts wickedness to itself,—wickedness which it has forged first. Then he goes out and proclaims his acquisition; but indeed to show himself out for what he is.

Then come plots and treacherous whisperings, and they persuade themselves that God is against the One they would make their victim. "A thing of Belial," they say, "cleaveth fast to him; and now that he lieth, he shall rise up no more." How readily the cry upon the cross would be for such an implication of guilt! God Himself confessedly against the holy Sufferer; and this was but the last, doubtless, in their eyes, of many similar things. The betrayal of Judas closes the story of man's uttermost wickedness with the spurning heel of a false friend. The sop dipped in the dish was the sign of friendship: he receives it, and goes out; love's last witness finding no response,—"after the sop, Satan entered into him" (John xiii. 27).

3 (10-12): God manifests Himself.
(i.) the cry to Jehovah.
(ii.) the witness of His delight.
(iii.) set before His face.

4 (13): The voice from the earth.

But thou, Jehovah, be [u] favorable unto me,
and raise me up, that I may [v] recompense them.
By this I know that thou [w] delightest in me,
because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.
And *me* in my [x] perfectness thou holdest up,
and settest me [y] before thy face forever.

[z] Blessed be Jehovah, God of Israel,
from [a] everlasting unto everlasting!
[b] Amen, and Amen.

u Ps. 40. 11 with Acts 13. 33-35.
v Ps. 109.16-20. *cf.* Rev.1.7.
w *cf.* Acts 4. 10, 11.
x *cf.* Acts 2. 24, 27.
y Ps. 16. 11. *cf.* Heb.2.9. *cf.* Heb.1.3.
z Ps. 72. 18-20. Ps. 89. 52; Ps. 106. 48; Ps. 150.
a Ps. 90. 2.
b Rev. 5. 13, 14.

3. Such, then, is man, and towards Him who in grace has come to be his Deliverer. But if *he* is thus in his innermost heart revealed, God manifests Himself at length in behalf of the object of his enmity. This is not needful here to be told at length, for it has been again and again the subject of these psalms; but it is clearly enough shown out in the words of the same Speaker who has been heard throughout. He is answered in resurrection, raised up for the recompense of friends and foes alike. The enmity of His adversaries cannot prevail against Him in whom Jehovah delights. His perfection is owned, and in it He is sustained, and set before the face of God forever. There is but One of whom all this could be said, and the psalm as a whole speaks of Him, as we have seen. It is thus a most suited close to this precious first book of the divine counsels as to Christ.

4. The formal close in the last verse is, I believe, indicated by the number as the voice of man universally at last, giving praise to the God of Israel, the Eternal, *from* that eternity before time began, and now on to eternity—a praise therefore which contemplates all *time* from first to last, the period of the creature and his failure, and of the dishonor done to the glorious Creator by his means. It is sealed with the Old Testament "verily, verily," which the Christ of the New has taken up and made His own.

BOOK 2.

The subject of the second book—as in some sense with every second book in the Bible—is that of ruin and redemption; the one the display of man, the other of God. We have still before us, prophetically, Israel in the latter days, and that more exclusively than hitherto, the first book, as giving the counsels of God as to Christ, being naturally much larger in scope.*

The faithful remnant are seen at the commencement in the most complete distress, driven out of Jernsalem, and therefore from the places sacred to God there: a loss of immense significance to those for whom the relationship of God with Israel as a nation is connected with His dwelling in the sanctuary. It is in this way that the covenant-name Jehovah is found so little in the book;† although the loss of the covenant title which it implies leads them at last, as cast upon the mercy of God alone, to know Him better in His own essential nature.‡ And thus the larger use of the word *Elohim*—God—is found, not

* Dr. Bullinger has added to the many proofs of the Pentateuchal character of these books, that "all the figures and illustrations" of the first book are from Genesis, as in the second book they are from Exodus: a very interesting and important fact which (not having myself verified it) I give upon his authority ("Names and Order of the Books of the Old Testament," p. 36.)

† "The second book of Psalms consists entirely of Elohimic psalms; for whilst in the first book Jehovah occurs two hundred and seventy-two times and Elohim only fifteen, the relation is here reversed: Elohim occurs one hundred and sixty-four times and Jehovah only thirty, and in almost every instance by a departure from the customary mode of expression for reasons that lie close at hand." (Delitzsch, Com. on the Psalms, vol. ii., p. 51.)

‡ The typical history of Ruth has already shown us the salvation of Israel in this view of it. (See Notes on that book.)

merely in the psalms which speak of the ruin, but in those that speak of the redemption also; in fact, throughout this second book. And this is a principle in His dealings with His people: every experience of need and distress is suffered to be, in order finally to bring out that which in Him meets it,—to give knowledge which shall abide for eternity, and be of unspeakable value for the soul.

The banishment of the remnant from Jerusalem shows that we have here the time of the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, the time when they are warned to flee (Matt. xxiv. 15, 16), the power of Antichrist being now established there. It is the time, therefore, of unequaled tribulation (comp. Dan. xii. 1), which is closed for them by the revelation of the Lord from heaven (Matt. xxiv. 30, and comp. Dan. vii. 13, Zech. xiv. 3, *seq.*); a time upon which so much of prophecy is concentered, as that in which the conflict between good and evil reaches its crisis, and the issues are reached and realized; which Scripture therefore entitles the time of "harvest." The harvest is reaped by angelic hands (Matt. xiii. 39, 41, 49).

The book is divided, very similarly to the first book, into three main parts, the first and third of which are, in their main features, Messianic; while the second consists mainly of remnant psalms, which give the experiences and exercises of the faithful in Israel, to which the Spirit of Christ furnishes expressions of faith which (even where transcending their intelligence) will be their comfort and stay in those days of "rebuke and blasphemy" which precede their deliverance.

SUBD. 1.

The truths, then, that are characteristic of this book are, ruin in responsibility, and redemption in grace. The first subdivision, giving as such the introduction to the whole, exemplifies this fully. It consists of *ten* psalms, the responsibility number, but which are divided again into *eight* (xlii.–xlix.) and *two* (l., li.). These *eight* psalms give us thus the new covenant number, which is, as that, the fullest expression of grace, and of the ruin of man under the old. These psalms are, moreover, Korahite psalms; psalm xliii. has no title, but is only an apparent exception, its character showing it to be practically a continuation of the preceding one. The sons of Korah are mentioned in the book of Numbers as having escaped the judgment that fell upon their father in the wilderness. They are suited witnesses therefore to that divine grace which is now their theme. The two psalms which follow bring us back to the consideration of the people's sin, which had brought them into the condition of outcasts from Jehovah's presence, which the first psalms of the book so touchingly lament.

But the subject that has pre-eminent place in this subdivision is the coming of the Deliverer-King to Zion, with the deliverance implied by this, whether from external evils or worse internal ones, for which repentance is God's way of escape. The person of the King, as both divine and human, is shown out here also with the most absolute simplicity, displaying the faith of those saints of old in Him who would bring redemption to them, in bright relief to the dishonoring unbelief of the nation afterwards.

Sec. 1.

Redemption finds its place in this book in its twofold character, as redemption by blood and redemption by power. Both are needed—the ransom-price, which is, of course, for God, and the actual coming in of power, which knocks off the shackles of the slave, and sets at liberty. *Redemption* has always in it the thought of deliverance accomplished, which takes place spiritually for all who as the people of God come into the value of that already accepted ransom. But they must be really and in heart, not nominally or probationally this, and thus participants of faith; and Israel only in this way find redemption. Thus it is the remnant only, not the nation, the remnant being in result the nation. Re-

demption by power sets them manifestly in this place; and this is the theme of the first section here.

The first two psalms are in structure and in theme so alike, that—the second psalm also having no separate title as the other psalms of this series have—it is no wonder that they should have been looked upon as one. Delitzsch, after quoting for this Eusebius and a Jewish Midrash, says: "The similarity of the situation, of the general impress, of the structure, and of the refrain, is decisive in favor of these psalms, which are commonly reckoned as two, being one. The one psalm consists of three parts: thrice his pain breaks forth into complaint, and is each time again overcome by the admonitory voice of his higher consciousness. In the depicting of the past and the future there is unmistakable progress. And it is not until the third part (Ps. xliii.) that complaint, resignation, and hope are perfected by the language of confident prayer which supervenes." Yet there is a difference between the two psalms which (with their connection also) the numerical arrangement indicates. It is not needful to do more here than to refer to it.

PSALM XLII.

This with the following psalm gives the cry of the solitary,—that in the deepest sense, as cut off from Jehovah's presence. "The land of Jordan (the river of death) and of the Hermons" is here very significant. "Hermon" is a word which seems only capable of one meaning. Some would make it mean "prominent, high," which, of course, would suit well enough a mountain that is seen over nearly all the land of Israel. But spiritual meaning in this case would be difficult to find, and the derivation is also merely conjectural. On the other hand, the name seems evidently akin to "Hormah" and *herem*, the "ban", or dedication to God in the judgment of that which was evil. "For there can be no doubt," says Keil, "that that which lay at the foundation of the ban was the compulsory dedication to God of something which resists or impedes sanctification; so that in all cases in which it was carried into execution by the community or the magistracy, it was an act of the judicial holiness of God, manifesting itself in righteousness and judgment." If this, then, be the meaning, how clear is the connection between Hermon, the ban upon evil, and Jordan, the river of death, which has in fact its highest source in Hermon! And how the two together characterize the psalm! Israel will indeed, in the day we are contemplating, be in the land of death, and the day of the Lord is just the time of the enforcement of the ban upon evil, so imperatively necessary that blessing may at last come for the distracted earth! And this white-capped mountain, clothed with the light of heaven reflected from her snows, may well represent both the dread and the promise of that day. For the blessing will be through and after judgment.

Hermon might well be thus a prominent feature in the land in Israel's past history, as well as in the future crisis before us now. The land was the land of Canaan,—of nations sentenced to extermination for their iniquity; a sentence which Israel was to put into execution as a condition of their own blessing. It was a condition which, as we know, they failed to fulfill; and thus they came themselves under judgment, as having identified themselves with the objects of it. Hermon, as we may say, still dominated the land, the witness of a principle of government necessarily founded upon the holiness of the divine nature.

"The hill Mizar," which is associated with these, may speak of the condition to which, by this dealing of God with it, the soul is brought. It is literally "hill of littleness," which need not be the equivalent of "little hill." The hill may dwarf instead of being dwarfed; and in this way all would be in harmony. God brings down, that He may exalt, and thus the purport of His bringing into the place of judgment may be well expressed.

Hence, then, comes the cry of the soul, shut out from its place of refuge. God has become to it its one necessity; and here we may well find the second of those psalms of instruction, or Maskil psalms, of which we had the first in the memor-

BOOK II. (Psalm xlii.–lxxii.)

Israel's ruin and their redemption in the latter days.

SUBDIVISION 1. (xlii.–li.)

The King in Zion.

SECTION 1. (xlii.—xlix.)

Redemption by power.

Ps. xlii.

[1]PSALMS XLII., XLIII.

The cry of the solitary.

a XLII.

God the one need of the soul.

To the chief musician, *c* Maskil of the sons of *d* Korah.

1 (1-5): The cry after God.
(i.) God my life!
(ii.) away from Him.
(iii.) the realization of this.
(iv.) past experiences.

AS the *e* hart panteth after the water-brooks,
so panteth my soul after thee, O God!
My soul *f* thirsteth for God,—for the *g* living God*:
when shall I come and *h* appear before God?
My *i* tears have been my food day and night:
while they say to me all the day long, *j* Where is thy God?
When I remember these things, I *k* pour out my soul within me,—
how I *l* passed along with the multitude,—
how I went on with them to the house of God,
with the voice of song and praise,—a multitude keeping festival.

* *El*, the Mighty.

c Ps. 32, etc., titles.
d Ps. 44, etc., titles.
e *cf.* Lam. 1. 6. *cf.* Ps. 63. 1, 2.
f Ps. 84. 2. Ps. 143. 6.
g Deut. 5. 26. Matt. 16. 16.
h Ps. 84. 3-7. *cf.* Jer. 50. 4, 5.
i Ps. 80. 5. Lam. 1. 2, 12-17.
j ver. 10. Ps. 79. 10. Ps. 115. 2. Joel 2. 17. Mi. 7. 10. *cf.* Ps. 3. 2.
k 1 Sam. 1. 15. Ps. 142. 2, 3.
l *cf.* 2 Sam. 6. 12-15. Lam. 1. 7. Ps. 137. 1-6.

able thirty-second, the song of grace which imputeth not iniquity. Yes, it is grace itself which secures to us the deep and profitable lessons of God's holiness. Israel's covenant-God is acting here, though in disguise, and the sons of Korah are chosen with perfect suitability te give the instruction. Let us give heed none the less because the schoolmaster is one of ancient time.

1. "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God! My soul thirsteth for God,—for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" This is the effect which God has brought about by that withdrawal of Himself which is now to the awakened heart so intense a bitterness. God has become to it the One great Circumstance. And this is no exaggerated estimate, but the simplest reckoning that can be. The Living One is also the Life-giving One, and the very life itself of the soul. The water-brooks are the fit type, as we well know, of the Spirit of God, who both awakens these desires and satisfies them.

To the agony of such absence is added the presence of enemies, who, though they know not God themselves, realize the distress with which they taunt the object of their malice. Naturally, judging by outward signs largely, they even go beyond the truth, unable to understand the mystery of God's dealings with the people that He loves. And the forsaken one, though he refuses the taunt, has yet no answer to it. With Israel the possession of the land and God's dwelling-place in it were the necessary signs of divine favor toward them. Where else could the blood of atonement for their sins be sprinkled, or the intercessory priesthood appear for them before Him? No doubt, in the "many days" in which they have abode, according to Hosea's prophecy, "without a sacrifice, and

(v.) faith yet cleaving to God predicts the end.

[m] Why art thou cast down, my soul?
and why disquieted within me?
[n] hope thou in God:
for I shall [o] yet praise him
[who is] the health of my [p] countenance and my God.*

2 (6-11): The breach.

(i.) the cry of the solitary.

My soul is [q] cast down within me:
therefore do I [r] remember thee,
from the [s] land of Jordan and the Hermons,
from the hill Mizar.

(ii.) conflict.

'Deep is calling unto deep at the sound of thy cataracts:
all thy breakers and [t] billows are gone over me!

(iii.) reassurance.

[Yet] Jehovah will command his [v] loving-mercy in the day-time:
and in the [w] night shall his song be with me,
[x] prayer to the God † of my life.

m ver. 11. Ps. 43. 5. *cf.* 1 Sam. 30. 6.
n Lam. 3. 21-26. Ps. 33. 18, 22.
o Ps. 71. 14. *cf.* Jer. 33. 6-13.
p Ps. 4. 6. Prov. 16. 15.
q Ps. 38. 6. Ps. 44. 25.
r Ps. 121. 1, 2. Ps. 130. 5-8.
s *cf.* 2 Sam. 17. 22. Ps. 63. 1. *cf.* Matt. 24. 15-21.
t Jer. 12. 5. Josh. 3. 15. 2 Sam. 22. 5.
u Jonah 2. 3-6.
v Ps. 56. 3. *cf.* Jer. 32. 6-15, 36-44. Isa. 54. 7, 8.
w *cf.* Acts 16. 25. Ps. 77. 6. Job 35. 10.
x Ps. 141. 2.

* The Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate versions read here uniformly with verse twelve and xliii. 5, which is found also in the Hebrew by a change in the division of the words and verses. As they commonly stand, the words produce no proper closing cadence; while one old Hebrew MS. points out the erroneousness of the division here (comp. Delitzsch, Comm.).

† *El.*

without an ephod" (iii. 4), they have got accustomed to such a condition, and hardened themselves against the accusation which it implies. Nay, they can go further, and look at themselves as suffering for the sins of others, rather than for their own. In the days to which we look forward here, and with the remnant in whom God is working, afresh cast out of the land of which they have had brief possession, such arguments will be impossible. Conviction of sin will be doing its bitter but salutary work among them, prophecy and promise emphasizing the contrast of their forlorn condition with the national hopes. Distance from the city with which these are all bound up will not be measured by the few miles which sum it up in space. No, it is moral—spiritual.

Past experiences throng in, to intensify the bitterness. We are made to realize the gladness with which some at least of this people, exiled for so many generations, will return to set up again, as in Ezra's time, their altar to the God of their fathers, under the protection of that covenant with Gentile power (Dan. ix. 27) so soon to be broken, and the altar itself devoted to the "abomination" of worse than heathen idolatry. That gleam of sunshine has in this psalm been already swallowed up in the blackness of a tempestuous eclipse. It abides as a memory of distress; "how I passed along with the multitude, how I went on with them to the house of God, with the voice of singing and praise—a multitude keeping festival." And yet the soul cannot let it go as a mere transient vision: faith stirred by it lays hold with its resolute will of this past, to recall it, and make it abiding; the soul rebukes its own despondency: "Why art thou cast down? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in *God*." Yes, here is what is permanent, what is eternal: hope in God, even though thou canst not find Him; though clouds are round about Him, and thou canst not come unto His seat; though His ways are in deepest mystery; though even thou couldst not find a promise that thou couldst claim undoubtedly. He Himself is promise! In His own all-pitying love—in the goodness of His nature, passing all that we can tell or think,—in *Himself* thou canst find refuge, a door wide open, and strong fortress walls that close around the one who has fled to Him. Can He say, you have trusted Me too much? Nay, He cannot. Here is His word at last that applies, if nothing else does: "Blessed are *all* they who put their trust in Him."

(iv.) the conflict in experience.

I will say unto God* my [y]rock, Why hast thou [z]forgotten me?
why go I mourning because of the [a]oppression of the enemy?

(v.) taunted with the divine ways.

[As] with [b]crushing of my bones, mine oppressors reproach me,
when they say all the day long to me, [c]Where is thy God?

(vi.) the rally of faith.

[d]Why art thou cast down, my soul?
and why art thou disquieted within me?
hope thou in God:
for I shall yet praise him,
[who is] the health of my countenance and [e]my God.

[y] Ps. 18. 2. [z] Ps. 13. 1. Ps. 44. 24. [a] Ps. 43. 2. Ps. 56. 1, 2. Ps. 17. 9. [b] Ps. 94. 4-6. [c] ver. 3. Ps. 79. 10. Mi. 7. 10. [d] ver 5. Ps. 43. 5. [e] Ps. 38. 21.

Ps. xliii.

[b]PSALM XLIII.

Deliverance sought from Antichrist and his adherents.

(i.) the rebellious mass.

[f]JUDGE me, O God!
and plead my cause against an [g]ungodly nation;
rescue me from a man of [h]deceit and iniquity.

[f] Ps. 26. 1. [g] Ps. 4. 3, 4. *cf.* Isa. 1. 4. [h] Ps. 10. 7. *cf.* 2 Jno. 7. *cf.* Rev. 13. 11-18.

* *El.*

From this point the soul poises itself for a flight, and a song, "For I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance and my God." You can see that the face has already brightened. There is no argument that a soul that knows not God can at all discern: "the secret of the Lord is" only "with them that fear Him; and *His covenant*, to show it to them."

2. Would not one say, then, that the trouble would be over now? And how often we think it is, when in fact we have but been lifted up on the crest of a wave, which presently sinks deeper than before. Thus the second part of the psalm reveals worse perplexity than the first. The distance between the soul and God is more evident; there seems a more positive breach; though the eye is turned as ever imploringly toward Him. It is here that we can localize the place of distance as "the land of Jordan and the Hermons, the hill Mizar." The significance of this we have already seen. "My soul is cast down," says the speaker; and the voices of nature which surround him seem full of a might by which he is confounded and cast down: "deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy cataracts: all Thy breakers and billows are gone over me."

But again he rises with more assured confidence. "Jehovah"—and here for the first time the covenant-Name, the pledge of unchangeable faithfulness, is used—"Jehovah will command His loving-kindness in the day-time; and in the night shall His song be with me,—prayer to the God of my life."

Still the conflict is real; experience is against experience. God is his Rock; and yet God has, as far as experience goes, forsaken him. He urges it to God Himself, and the bitterness of the oppression of the enemy, who with his unanswerable taunts reproaches him with this forsaking of God,—crushing his bones with it, as he says; making his strength collapse at the thought. Yet even while he says it, faith rallies and turns defeat into victory with its old self-rebuke, "Why art thou cast down?" and he reaffirms his former confidence.

Psalm XLIII.

The forty-third psalm goes back to Jerusalem and the state of things there. In the former one, the "enemy" seems naturally to be rather the outside foe, the Gentile. In the present, it is the ungodly nation and the man of deceit and iniquity, with whom they are identifying themselves,—that is, Antichrist. He

(ii.) cast off of God and under the hand of the enemy.

For thou art the God of my [i]strength:
why hast thou cast me off?
why go I [j]mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

(iii.) but restoration predicted to God's tabernacles.

Send out thy [k]light and thy truth,
they shall lead me:
they shall [l]bring me to thy [m]holy hill and to thy [n]tabernacles.

(iv.) and a future experience like the past.

And I will go unto the [o]altar of God,
to God* my [p]exultant joy:
and upon the harp will I [q]praise thee,
O God, [r]my God!

(v.) cleaving to God, faith sees the end.

[s]Why art thou cast down, my soul?
and why art thou disquieted within me?
hope thou in God:
for I shall yet praise him,
[who is] the health of my countenance and my God.

[i] Ps. 73. 26.
[j] Ps. 42. 9. *cf.* Mt. 5. 4.
[k] *cf.* 2 Chr. 6. 34-39.
[l] Ps. 126. 1.
[m] Ps. 15. 1.
[n] Ps. 84. 1,2.
[o] Ps 84. 3.
[p] *cf.* Rom. 5. 11.
[q] Ps. 27. 6.
[r] Ps. 48. 14.
[s] Ps. 42. 5,11.

Ps. xliv.

[2]PSALM XLIV.

Faith building on the testimony of past deliverances, and sustained, though in contrasted circumstances.

To the chief musician, Maskil of the sons of Korah.

1 (1-3): The power that wrought was God's alone. (i.) former days.

O GOD, with our ears we have [t]heard,
our fathers have told us,
the work thou wroughtest in [u]their days,—in days of old.

[t] Ps. 78. 1-4.
[u] Is. 51. 9,10.

* *El.*

is "the liar," as the apostle John says, who denying altogether the Father and the Son,—that is, the *Christian* revelation,—denies also, as to the Jewish, not that there *is* a Christ (a Messiah), but "that *Jesus* is the Christ" (1 John ii. 22). Thus the psalmist now prays, "Send out Thy light and truth" and "*they* shall lead me; they shall bring me to Thy holy hill and to Thy tabernacles." Gloriously will these be indeed displayed when the true Christ shall be revealed from heaven, and with the breath of His lips destroy the wicked one. Deliverance will then have come for the godly ones among the people, as in a moment; Israel's holy places be restored, and their worship be resumed, never again to know interruption.

As to the rest of the psalm, it is largely a repetition of the previous one; and in these outline-notes we need hardly dwell upon it.

Psalm XLIV.

In the forty-fourth psalm, faith goes back to the testimony of days long past, to build itself up on this, amid circumstances which yet are in such utter contrast. And this is what faith supposes, that the circumstances are, at least, not such as one can build upon. Faith is in "things unseen," making that substantial which to mere sight and sense have no reality. Not that it has not foundations, but that these too are beyond natural sight, in the sphere of the spiritual, and thus, to the carnal, dreams.

1. The history of those days so long gone has indeed for Israel to bear the reproach of the meantime experience. Its testimony is of God acting in triumphant power, in behalf of a people now for long scattered and under the heel of the Gentiles, for whom how many vain hopes have kindled, only to be dis-

(ii.) the testimony.

(iii.) God manifest for them.

Thou with thy hand didst [v]dispossess nations, and [w]plantedst *them:*
Thou didst [x]break up races and [y]cast them out.
For not with [z]their swords did they possess the land,
nor did their own arm save them:
but [a]thy right hand, and thine arm, and the [b]light of thy countenance;
for thou hadst [c]accepted them.

2 (4, 5): Faith applies the testimony.
(i.) the same God.
(ii.) our Deliverer now.

Thou art he—my [d]King, O God!
command [e]deliverances for Jacob.
Through thee will we push down our [f]oppressors:
by thy name will we [g]tread down those that rise against us.

3 (6-8): Shut up to God (i.) as only sufficient.

For I will not [h]trust in my bow:
nor shall my sword save me.

v Josh. 11. 18-20. Josh. 12.
w Ps. 80. 8-11. Ex. 15. 17.
x Ex. 15. 14-16.
y Deu. 7. 1, 2.
z Deu. 8. 17. Judg. 7. 2-7.
a Ex. 15. 6, 7.
b *cf.* Hab. 3. 3-7. *cf.* Ps. 89. 15.
c Deu. 7. 7, 8. Deu. 10. 15.
d Ps. 84. 3.
e Ps. 18. 50.
f Ps. 60. 12.
g *cf.* Zech. 10. 5-7.
h Ps. 20. 7. *ctr.* Ps. 78. 9.

persed and put out in worse darkness than before. None more intense can be than that in which the period to which these psalms apply will find those whose exercises are recorded in them. The nation is lapsed into a condition of utter apostasy, for which the hand of God is necessarily upon them, and the remnant remaining true are yet under the shadow of this. From it they emerge at last, with the fruit of needed exercise secured by a discipline which divine love has ordained for them, into the apprehension of favor never to be lost again.

The lesson here is of absolute dependence on God, which to a feeble and oppressed people is the only possible source of encouragement. To leave man out of the question is to leave out an incalculable element, always causing uncertainty and disappointment. To make God all is to make reckoning simple, safe, and the balance sheet an immense surplus, whatever the expenditure. Let things be as they may, His grace is such as to give one amplest title to reckon upon Him. Here boldness of faith is only simplicity of obedience.

If this God is our God, we may claim Him wherever we find Him. All histories of His past ways become light for us. No laws of His in nature are so unchangeable as He Himself is. As He has ordained for us as His creatures a world of fixed realities amid which to walk, this spiritual world in which we find ourselves, living, and walking, and having our being in Him, is still as far beyond it as eternity beyond time, or heaven beyond earth. Here there is no caprice, but immutability itself, inviting absolute confidence. No dispensations—though they may variously reflect Him—change the Eternal. And this is how the very histories of Scripture become for us types and prophecies, and (in another sense than the Preacher meant it) "that which has been is that which shall be."

So the remnant go back here to the beginning of their national history, to that which had come down to them from their fathers, who not with their own swords took possession of the land. God had dispossessed the nations and planted them; He had broken up races, and cast them out. His right hand, His arm, the light of His countenance, had manifested His acceptance of them. All this abode with them for present wisdom. Man's nothingness was just as certain; God's sufficiency was just as perfect.

2. And so now they claim and proclaim this God as theirs. "Thou art He,"—Thou art the same,—"my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob." Yes, Jacob, this worm of the dust, can only be delivered by Him who can *command* deliverances for him. And then, falling upon that arm of strength, there is at once an outburst of confidence: "Through Thee will we push down our oppressors; and by Thy name will we tread down those that rise against us." Here is the application of that past history; and a reckoning like this has in it no element of deception.

3. The remembrance becomes fruitful in the production of character. In self-

(ii.) testified by deliverances.
(iii.) to His praise.

For thou didst save us from our oppressors,
and put to [t]shame those that hated us. [t] Ps. 6. 10.
In God do we [j]glory all day long, [j] *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 31. Ps. 34. 2.
and thy name will we praise for ever. Selah.

4 (9-14): The testing of present experiences.
(i.) alone, without Him.
(ii.) nay, He in opposition.
(iii.) the full realization.
(iv.) failure even for Him!
(v.) governmental ways.
(vi.) the full evil.

But thou hast [k]cast off and put us to confusion, [k] Ps. 89. 38.
and [l]goest not forth with our hosts. [l] Ps. 60. 10.
Thou makest us [m]turn back from the oppressor; [m] Deu. 28. 25.
and those that hate us [n]spoil for themselves. [n] Ps. 74. 1-8.
Thou hast given us up like [o]sheep to [be] meat, [o] ver. 22.
and hast [p]scattered us among the nations. [p] Lev. 26. 32, 33.
Thou [q]sellest thy people for naught, [q] Jer. 15. 13, 14.
and got no [r]increase by the price. [r] *cf.* Nu. 14. 13, 14.
Thou hast made us a [s]reproach to our neighbors, [s] Ps. 79. 4. *cf.* Jer. 24. 9.
mockery and derision to those around us.
Thou makest us a [t]proverb among the nations, [t] Deu. 28. 37.
a shaking of head among the races [of men].

5 (15-21): Exercised, yet cleaving to God.
(i.) constant, entire self-consciousness.
(ii.) in view of the slanderer and persecutor.
(iii.) God still remembered.
(iv.) and no apostasy.
(v.) spite of His ways.
(vi.) innocence as to full evil
(vii.) claimed in view of God's perfect knowledge.

My [u]confusion is before me all the day long, [u] *cf.* Dan. 9. 7, 8.
and the shame of my face hath covered me,
Because of the voice of the reproachful and blasphemer,—
because of the [v]enemy and the revengeful. [v] *cf.* Ps. 8. 2.
All this is [w]come upon us, [x]yet we have not forgotten thee, [w] *cf.* Neh. 9. 32. [x] *cf.* Dan. 9. 13.
nor dealt [y]falsely with thy covenant. [y] Ps. 7. 3, 4.
Our [z]heart is not turned back; [z] *cf.* Acts 7. 39.
nor have our [a]steps declined from thy path; [a] Ps. 37. 31.
Though thou hast crushed us in the place of [b]jackals, [b] Jer. 9. 11.
and covered us with the [c]shadow of death. [c] Ps. 107. 10, 14.
If we have [d]forgotten the name of our God, [d] ver. 17.
or stretched out our palms toward a [e]strange god,— [e] Ps. 81. 9.
Shall not God [f]search this out? [f] Zeph. 1. 12.
for he knoweth the [g]secrets of the heart. [g] Ps. 139. 1-4.

distrust like theirs, the children of those conquerors of old proclaim their genealogy. "I will not trust in my bow: nor shall my sword save me." Testified by deliverances all along their history, which only His hand could have effected, the divine sufficiency is their only and constant boast, and His name shall be their praise forever. This is that for which He works, that His people may know Him, to their ceaseless joy, this joy in Him being the spring of power in them, and what unites His creatures to Himself forever. The worship of eternity is the seal of its blessing and perfection too. God is in His place, and the creature in his happy place with God.

4. But now we have the testing of faith by those circumstances which seem so thoroughly in contrast with this claim of the divine favor. Here there scarcely needs comment. The facts are plain to all and speak for themselves. The recital naturally goes on gathering gloom as it proceeds. First, though their hosts still go forth, God is no longer with them, as of old. Then there follows necessarily defeat and spoiling. Then they become mere sheep for the slaughter, scattered among the victorious nations. God too acquires no glory by the giving up of His people: those who should have been for His honor have become a reproach; nay, far and wide, an evil proverb and a shaking of the head.

5. These are the circumstances; now they speak of their inward state, exercised by all this, feeling it keenly, covered with shame and confusion of face,

6 (22-26): Is not the limit reached?
(i.) complete integrity.
(ii.) yet still rejection.
(iii.) and hiding of face.
(iv.) prostration of strength.
(v.) be once more with us.

Because for [h]thy sake we are killed all the day long: [h] Rom. 8.36. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 11.
we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.
[i]Awake! why sleepest thou, O Lord? [i] Isa. 51. 9.
arise! cast not off for [j]ever! * [j] Ps. 13. 1.
Why [k]hidest thou thy face? [k] Deu. 31. 17, 18. Ps. 88. 14.
[and] forgettest our affliction and our oppression?
For our soul is [l]bowed down to the dust: [l] Ps. 57. 6.
our belly cleaveth to the earth.
Arise for our help,
and [m]redeem us for thy [n]mercies' sake. [m] Ps. 25. 22. [n] *cf.* Ps. 51. 1.

* *Literally*, "for perpetuity."

able to answer nothing in the presence of those who reproach and blaspheme, of enemies and vengeful men. Yet in spite of all, they cleave to God, neither their heart nor their steps turned aside from Him, though crushed in the place of prowling jackals, covered with the shadow of death. Had they forgotten Him, would they, they ask, be able to conceal it from Him? Their appeal is to One perfect in knowledge.

6. Must there not be, then, a limit to this sorrow? can He forget forever? When *their* enemies are *His* enemies, and for His sake they are being slaughtered? Can the hiding of His face continue, and their affliction as if unknown to Him? Now in the utter prostration of their strength, they cry to Him to arise and for His mercies' sake to redeem them.

The next psalm shows the glorious answer to this prayer.

Psalm XLV.

Suddenly the Lord will appear. As Zechariah shows (chap. xiv.) when Jerusalem is compassed by her enemies, and just falling, nay, has fallen into their hands,—the city taken, the houses rifled, and half of the city gone forth into captivity, while "the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city,"—then "shall Jehovah go forth, and fight with those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle." This might be, and has been, taken as a providential visit; but what follows shows conclusively, and in agreement with many other prophecies, (Dan. vii. 13, 14, etc.) that it is—though indeed Jehovah—the Son of Man who comes: for "His *feet shall stand* in that day on the Mount of Olives . . . . and Jehovah my God shall come, and all the holy ones with Thee."

"Saints" it is in our common version; but we must not press this as necessarily implying *men*. "The holy ones" may be angels, and more naturally: for it is not till the New Testament that we have it revealed that "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4). But a personal coming, with at least angels, is clearly announced; and then it is that "Jehovah shall be King over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Jehovah, and His name one."

The psalm before us gives us no date nor details of the coming of the Lord; and the veil over its teaching is thick enough to have blinded the critics who with so much pains seek to put themselves back into the Old Testament darkness in order to get the true light thereupon. Here we may choose, if we will follow them, between Solomon, Ahab, Joram, the Syrian Alexander, a Persian monarch, or wander, if we please, further still. With all this we gain no help to spiritual conception, if even we are not led to patch and mutilate after the manner of Cheyne, in order to get rid of any possibility of holding what is in disrepute as the "traditional" one. May not, after all, this traditional one be just the effect of the glory of Christ shining out of Scripture all down the centuries? and thus tradition be but a poor name for the continual witness of eyes that have seen it?

The psalm is another *Maskil*, or psalm of instruction,—pointed out to us thus as having special wisdom for the time to which all these psalms refer. If it be

Ps. xlv.

[3]PSALM XLV.

The glory of the Messiah, united to His people.

To the chief musician, upon [o] Shoshannim, [p] Maskil of the sons of [q] Korah: a [r] song of the [s] Beloved.

1 (1, 2): The King's pre-eminence. (i.) unison of heart and tongue in praise. (ii.) the Witness.

MY heart 'overfloweth [u] good matter:
I speak what I have made, touching the [v] king;
my tongue is the pen of a [w] ready writer.
Thou art [x] fairer far* than the sons of men:
[y] grace is poured into thy lips;
[z] therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.

* A reduplicative form, which makes it emphatic.

[o] Ps. 69, 80, titles. Song 6. 3.
[p] Ps. 32, etc., titles.
[q] Ps. 42, etc., titles.
[r] Song 1. 1.
[s] Song 5. 8.
[t] *ctr.* Ps. 39. 2–4.
[u] *cf.* Eph. 3. 8.
[v] Ps. 44. 4.
[w] *cf.* Col. 1. 13–20.
[x] Song 5. 10–16.
[y] Lk. 4. 22.
[z] *cf.* Phil. 2. 5–10.

the appearing of Messiah which is the people's deliverance from all their sorrows, we must see how necessarily this must have its place in such a series.

The psalm is also (along with the sixty-ninth and eightieth) entitled, "*al-shoshannim*," or, "upon lilies," which has been given various conjectural references to instruments or current songs, so purely conjectural and so entirely without spiritual meaning, that we can lose nothing by ignoring them altogether. But the home of the lily, if we may so say, is in the Song of songs, where we shall find it undoubtedly with such spiritual significance emphasized, and in various details, as found in the valleys, growing among thorns, the roes (or gazelles) pasturing among them; as to which Dr. Thompson says,—"Our flower delights most in the valleys, but it is also found on the mountains. It grows among thorns, and I have sadly lacerated my hands in extricating it from them. Nothing can be in higher contrast than the luxuriant velvety softness of this lily, and the crabbed, tangled hedge of thorns about it. Gazelles still delight to feed among them; and you can scarcely ride through the woods north of Tabor, where these lilies abound, without frightening them from their flowery pasture."

The lily is the ideal thus of purity, beauty, and attractive grace, which may be found (though not necessarily) in lowliest circumstances, and indeed encompassed with the signs of the curse, though foreign to its own nature. Such an emblem may well suit the Lord Himself in His character as Man; and His people too, as by grace partaking with Him in it. In the psalm before us both these are seen together, and to both it may well refer.

Corresponding to this, we have, as the designation of the whole psalm, "a song of loves," or "of the beloved"—"beloved one," in the Septuagint; persons (Olshausen); objects (Delitzsch). The variation is not, after all, a very great one, whether it express the affection of the heart, or the object of the affection; and whether this be simply Christ, or Christ and His people together. The true heart has always found the meaning here, and whether in the Synagogue of old, or the Church of the later dispensation, it has been recognized as a prophecy of the Christ of God.

1. Heart and tongue are in unison in the speaker here. His theme possesses and carries him away. He has to declare his delight in it, how full he is of the "good matter" he pours forth. Even while he speaks he turns from those he is addressing, to the glorious Presence which shines upon him, to pour out his praise directly to Him.

"Thou art fairer far," he says, "than the sons of men"—Son of man, but transcending them all; and with this personal excellence joins itself a divine quality of speech,—"grace is poured into Thy lips." In this he discerns the ground, not of temporary blessing, as when God brought forth man at the beginning and blessed them, (Gen. i. 28,) but of eternal. For here is a perfection which shall not pass away, and One qualified perfectly to communicate between God and man. There is but One such Man: there has never been another—a

2 (3-5): Conflict with His enemies.
(i.) preparation.
(ii.) a Warrior-Saviour.
(iii.) accomplishment.

[a]Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O [b]mighty one,
[with] thy [c]glory and majesty.
And in thy majesty [d]ride prosperously,
on account of [e]truth and meek* righteousness;
and thy right hand shall teach thee [f]terrible things.
Thine [g]arrows are sharp—[h]peoples fall under thee—
in the heart of the king's [i]enemies.

* Or "suffering."

a cf. 2 Thes. 1. 8.
b cf. Is. 9. 6.
c cf. Heb. 2. 9.
d cf. Rev. 19. 11-16.
e cf. Ps.15. 2.
f Ps. 46. 8.
g Ps. 2. 9. Ps. 110. 6.
h Ps. 18. 43, 44.
i cf. Lk. 19. 27.

true "Second Man," in every respect. Therefore there is but this One to whom such language can refer. Although he does not bring out the full meaning of the passage, we must agree with Alexander, that "on any hypothesis except the Messianic one, this verse is unintelligible."*

2. Thus the subject of the psalm is defined. But the King thus glorious and owned of God is not on that account welcomed in peace to His throne by the world's homage. No: He has to conquer His kingdom, as had David. The next three verses therefore speak of the putting down of His enemies. He is invited to gird His sword upon His thigh with glory and majesty, and to ride forth, as He is seen in the Apocalyptic vision. Truth and the cause of meek (or suffering) righteousness demand the judgment which He comes to execute. Grace has been shown and been rejected: only judgment therefore remains; and "when Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. xxvi. 9, 10). The "grace poured into His lips" is exchanged therefore for a sword. It is the answer to the cry of the previous psalm; and in fact the battle is soon over when once the day of long-suffering has reached its limit. The peoples fall under Him: but this is only the prelude to a very different and contrasted scene.

3. The third section flashes out the full glory of the King. The apostle's comment and quotation, in the epistle to the Hebrews (i. 7–9), expressly contrast it with what is angelic merely: "Of the angels it† saith: "He maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire; but of the Son: Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom."‡

* The perplexity of commentators in rendering this text is strange enough; not indeed when they would apply it to a Persian monarch, or even an Israelitish king, but even when they discern its Messianic reference. The reason is that dull literality which by its dullness even ceases to be literal. "Fairness" or "beauty"—the same word—is ascribed to "wisdom" by the prophet, (Ezek. xxviii. 7,) and so need not be "physical" merely; and it is naive enough, after so interpreting it, to enlarge then on the difficulty, which is of one's own making, how can mere physical beauty be the ground of eternal blessing; and then to affirm the passage itself in proof!

Then "grace poured into the lips" is surely not the same as "grace playing round the lips," and the former expression is not unnatural as expressive of speech that has divine unction. A King of Israel, who finds eternal blessing on this account,—pre-eminent above all the sons of men, can only be the "King Messiah" of whom the Targum understands it here.

† "It" seems preferable to "he": it is simply Scripture to which he appears to refer. And even if God be referred to as the Speaker, this can only be as the true Author of Scripture, as the passage from the psalm before us is clearly no direct divine address.

‡ The meaning, one would suppose to be thus settled for the Christian. Alas, to-day there are so many Christians who are not Christian, that no apostolic authority can settle it for them; and wherever Christ is in question, whether in the Old Testament or the New, there Satan is now permitted to show his skill in exegesis. As it needs to be known of what high dignitaries in the Church are capable, let us once more quote the Oxford professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture, Cheyne. He translates [and supplements] as follows:

"As for thy throne, [firm is its foundation,]
God [hath established it] for ever and ever:
a sceptre of equity is the sceptre of thy kingdom."

And he accepts it as probable that the psalm refers to Ahab! "though of course, no editor of temple-songs would have admitted such a poem into his collection had he supposed that it referred to Ahab, or indeed to any king of (northern) Israel. But *if he mistook* the psalm for a hymn to some typically Messianic king of Judah, or *why not say at once, to the Messiah of the future*, he might well have admitted it, especially if he read *verse* 13*a* in its present *most probably* corrupt form, misinterpreted by him.

3 (6-8): His manifestation in glory.
(i.) a throne righteous, divine, eternal.
(ii.) yet the King has fellows in dependence.
(iii.) spiritual graces of the Risen One.

Thy [j]throne, O [k]God, is for ever and aye:
the [l]sceptre of thy kingdom is an even sceptre.
Thou [m]lovest righteousness, and [n]hatest wickedness:
therefore God, [o]thy God, hath [p]anointed thee with the oil of [q]gladness
[r]above thy fellows.
All thy [s]garments are [t]myrrh and aloes [and] cassia;
out of [u]ivory palaces stringed instruments have made thee glad.

j Heb. 1.8,9. Ps. 93. 2.
k *cf.* Jno.1.1. *cf.* Heb.1.3.
l Ps. 89. 14.
m Ps. 11. 7.
n Jer. 44. 4.
o *cf.* Ps.22.1.
p *cf.* Ps. 2. 2.
q Ps. 21. 6.
r Ps. 89. 27. *cf.* Col.1.18.
s *cf.*Ps.22.18.
t *cf.* Mt. 2.11 with Jno. 19. 39, 40.
u *ctr.* Amos 3. 15.

Yes, the kingdom of God is indeed come, never to pass away. Human hands they are that take the empire; but that is a mystery and marvel of the Divine ways. "To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Father of eternity, the Prince of peace" (Isa. ix. 6). How blessed the announcement! how clearly has it been made! and that trumpet of jubilee is soon to sound which shall call the saints of every time to enter upon their inheritance. When He inherits, they too shall begin to inherit who are heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ. God "hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man" (John v. 27); and here also they share (through His grace) with Him, in ways suited (of course) to creature-capacities. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me upon My throne; even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on His throne" (Rev. iii. 21).

Here is careful discrimination, with abounding grace. Upon the Father's throne none could surely sit, except Himself. And let us observe that, while here, as soon as His kingdom is announced, we hear—strange as it may seem—of "fellows"; yet the same necessary discrimination is observed. Man Himself, and exalted as Man by God, it is added, "God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness *above* Thy fellows."

Striking it is how in this Jewish psalm of Christ, and with millennial glory now in view, we should find just in this place, more than a hint thrown out of what is outside of Jewish blessing altogether. No doubt it is something which, apart from the New Testament, we should not be able to realize; and even with it, we may take it loosely as referring to men at large who as saints are brought into relationship with Him who sanctifies them. But the word "fellows," or "associates," seems to go further than this, and especially if we consider the place in which we find them spoken of here. The "queen" of this psalm, and *her* companions, are certainly earthly, and not heavenly saints. Here are those who

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"For my own part, I have no doubt that the psalm was prescrved in the Psalter on the theory of its original Messianic reference—a theory which *few will maintain now.*"

Coming to the verse before us, he tells us, "If we accept the text"—which he prefers not to do,—"Elohim may here be a title of the king," without the need of admitting that it implies a divine person. This because "the title Elohim is applied to the judicial authority (Ex. xxi. 6, xxii. 8), to Moses (Ex. vii. 1), and to the apparition of Samuel (1 Sam. xxviii. 13), and that a prophet, looking into the future, declares the Davidic family to be 'as Elohim, as the (or, an) angel of Jehovah' (Zech. xii. 8)." Still, he refuses this: "The one conclusive objection to this view is, that in the very next verse Elohim is used with distinct and sole reference to Jehovah (unless indeed, with St. Jerome and Bishop Pearson, we take Elohim there too as a vocative)—a use which corresponds to the pervading tendency of the Korahite psalms. It would be unnatural to interpret the word differently here."

Dismissing this idea, there remains but to read "Thy throne is God," meaning "thy throne is God's throne"; and this again meaning "as permanent as God's throne." But this also he rightly rejects as impossible, and then is brought face to face with the apostle's rendering in Hebrew, (which however he never notices as that); and then his unbelief comes plainly out:—

"The sum of the matter is that the only natural rendering of the received text is that of the versions, 'Thy throne, O God,' and the only natural interpretation that of the Targum, 'Thy throne, O Jehovah'. But is such an abrupt transition to Jehovah conceivable?" The end is that, the application to Christ being inconceivable (to him) also, he must interpolate! Such is the spirit of much of the higher criticism of the day!

4 (9-12): Earthly relations (i.) to the throne. (ii.) separation.

[v] Kings' daughters are among thine honorable women:
the [w] queen standeth on thy right hand
in [x] gold of Ophir.
[y] Hearken, daughter, and see, and incline thine ear;
and [z] forget thy people and thy father's house.

v *cf.* Song 6. 8.
w Is. 62. 3-5. *cf.* Jer. 3. 1.
x ver. 13.
y Gen. 24.57-61.
z *cf.* Gen. 12. 1, 2.

seem to occupy another place, and are spoken of by a title most suited for those whose home is with Christ above; filling thus, too, what *for us* would be otherwise an unfilled gap, even in this scene of glory. All this would naturally suggest such a view as we are taking.

This glorious King reigns then by divine right on the highest of thrones, and yet is a Man, and as such subject, even upon the throne which here He takes. What a guarantee of stability, and of the perfection of that Will that governs all! Freedom and obedience are only different sides of the perfect blessedness found in such a kingdom for the soul that has truly entered it.

Once more we are reminded of the personal excellences of the King. His "garments" are, of course, as always, that practical righteousness which He has loved and manifested in His human life. They are so perfumed with precious spices that they seem to consist of the very spices themselves. The myrrh and cassia (though the word used for this last is a different one) are principal ingredients in the holy anointing oil (Ex. xxx.), and therefore certainly typify graces of the Spirit which are found in Him. The aloes are reckoned among the "chief spices" (Song iv. 14). The myrrh is a gum which distills spontaneously from the plant, though it may be procured also by incision. Cassia seems to be a kind of cinnamon, and a bark; aloes also a fragrant wood. But it is hazardous to say more about them until the two latter have been more definitely determined. Perhaps these different characters of the spices may at least present to us more distinctly the whole manhood of our Lord as alike fragrant with spiritual perfection.

Difficulty also attends the rendering of the last part of the verse, as may be seen by the various translations. That which commends itself etymologically, and is most accepted perhaps to-day, furnishes also a meaning in sweet accord with what is here the theme. We may be able to say little about the "ivory palaces", although Solomon's ivory throne may give us perhaps the thought of regnant righteousness,—may appear like a symbol of the "great white throne" itself—needing but little transfer of application from a throne to a palace,—the *abode* of rulers. From such homes of purity, the sound of "stringed instruments" may well gladden the King's heart. They show man's power over inanimate nature, to fashion it to harmony of praise. Man's hand it is that draws the music out. Set over nature, he has largely yet made discord of it. Now the glorious King hears other strains. Here is what is now the result of His own work: He finds in it the fruit of the travail of His soul,—reconciliation carried fully out. And this the "*stringed* instruments"—controlled by man's *hand* entirely—best expresses.

4. The *fourth* section, as that, defines for us (not without need, if we think of many interpreters) that the relations in which the King is now to be seen are *earthly* relations. The figure of marriage is, as we know, used to image to us the union of Christ with His Church in glory; it is also used similarly to convey to us the relation of Jehovah to Israel, both in time past and in that to come,—suspended for the present through national unfaithfulness (Isa. l. 1; Hos. ii. 2). The relation in the first case is heavenly—to be enjoyed there; in the latter, earthly. The earthly may be also a figure of the heavenly; but the two are thus entirely distinct, and must be kept distinct in our minds, or we fall into confusion. Just so, there are two Jerusalems, put in contrast by the apostle in Galatians (iv. 25, 26), but the earthly in her glorious days to come being again an evident type of the heavenly one (comp. Ezek. xlvii. 1-12; xlviii. 30-35; with Rev. xxi., xxii.).

(iii.) to Him, the object of thy worship.
(iv.) the nations.

And the king shall [a]desire thy beauty:
for [b]he is thy Lord, and [c]worship thou him.
And the [d]daughter of Tyre is present with an [e]offering:
the rich among the people [f]intreat thy favor.

[a] *cf.* Song 4. 9.
[b] Is. 54. 5.
[c] *cf.* Gen. 24. 64.
[d] *cf.* Is. 49. 6, 22, 23.
cf. Is. 55. 5.
[e] *cf.* Is. 60.
[f] *cf.* Ps. 72. 9–11.

The Psalms are in their whole horizon earthly (cxv. 16); and, while there may be hints, as we have already seen, of a higher sphere of blessing, the common Old Testament character attaches to the book throughout. The "queen,"—the bride of the King—as all connections show, is therefore the earthly and not the heavenly bride. The "king's daughters" show us, in a not unusual figure, the representatives of the nations attendant upon One who is Lord of the whole earth. Israel alone has the place of bride, and to import the polygamy of ancient times into this scene of future blessedness not only occasions moral disquietude but is contrary to Scripture statements as to Israel's distinctive place. The "daughter of Tyre" in the twelfth verse is in fact but one of these "kings' daughters," and indicates their place.

The queen* stands at the right hand of the King, adorned with gold of Ophir: divine glory displayed in "fruitfulness"† from a naturally barren soil. How glorious will God manifest Himself at last in such fruit brought forth from the obdurate heart of man! How will it be "said of Jacob and of Israel"—comparing one with the other—"What hath God wrought!"

Now she is called, in view of the grace that has been shown her, to be a Manassite, forgetful of her kindred and her father's house. There must be no turning back to what has been left behind—to a condition wholly incompatible with her relationship to the glorious Person who desires her for Himself. He is indeed the Lord, and claims the entire affection and worship of the soul. It is in yielding Him this that all the sweetness of such a love as His is proved and enjoyed; and if we make Him all, we shall find how more than enough He is for all that heart can seek in Him. This is the knowledge of the new man, that "Christ is all"; all other competing objects having to disappear and give place to Him (Col. iii. 10, 11).

A simple truth, therefore, this should be to the Christian, and scarcely needing much enforcement. Yet it *does* need. How few of those who have turned to Him, yea, and found answer from Him, in the deepest need of their souls, have yet frankly taken Him for all other needs! How many have to find cistern after cistern of their own cracked in the hewing, before they apply themselves in full earnest to their own free fountain of living water! How little is it understood that Christ *and nothing else* will more than satisfy, when Christ and a great deal else to supplement Him will only bring one down to near starvation! Yet should it be difficult to see that a Christ honored and trusted as all-competent will justify that trust, when a Christ dishonored by other makeweights will seem to justify nothing but the *dis*trust?

So it will be found as often as we try it; verification will surely be found by experience on either side. And that is why so often a man's happiest time comes when circumstances should make him most miserable; when, other dependences having broken down, the Voice is heard which says, "Whosoever is athirst, let him come unto ME and drink!" But what a sorrow and what a shame, not to have heard that Voice before,—not to have known that HE was worthy of ALL trust, as surely as He was worthy of *any!*

Oh for an utter dependence upon Christ for all things! a dependence which shall realize itself as independence of all else beside Himself! How blessed to know that here is a fullness within reach of any man, and of which nothing can deprive the man who seeks it! For it we must be Manassites, with our faces

* *Shegal* is a queen by marriage, a queen consort, not in her own right (Wordsworth).
† Ophir is probably from *parah*, to be fruitful.

5 (13-17): Man with God.
(i.) the King's daughter.
(ii.) brought to the King.

The king's daughter is all [g]glorious within:
her [h]clothing is of interwoven gold.
She is [i]brought in broidery unto the king:
the [j]virgins that follow her, her companions, are brought unto thee.

g *cf.* Mt. 5.8. *cf.* Heb. 8. 8-13.
h *cf.* Zech.3. 3-5.
i *cf.* Is. 18.7.
j *cf.* Zech.14. 16.

towards heaven, Christ our goal and prize, to win Christ and be found in Him. This is the path of progress and of victory—of enjoyed competency all the way.

Israel shall find what He is for her also in the day which this psalm anticipates,—shall find Who this Joseph is who unknown has fed them in famine. And when the glory of the Lord shall thus have risen upon them, "the Gentiles shall come to their light, and kings to the brightness of its rising." This we find therefore now: "The daughter of Tyre is present with an offering: the rich among the people intreat thy favor." Tyre, the queen city of commerce, whose merchants are princes, and who knows well the value of all earthly things that can be bought, is now attracted by what no riches can purchase. She is here, not with a price, but with an offering. The rich intreat for what is greater riches. This is evidently a typical example of how the "Desire of all nations" will be found in Christ, Tyre, as the great trafficker, being the suited power to illustrate this. The facts here have all of them spiritual significance.

5. So now man is seen with God as never yet: the earth has caught the rays of the Sun of righteousness; the night is over and gone, the golden day is come. But this supposes, on the part of those brought near, the necessary requirements met of the divine nature. The number of this section which speaks of man with God, is that therefore which speaks also of responsibility and exercise, and of a way by which God's destined end is reached.

Accordingly we now return to look at the bride after another manner. She is now not only a king's bride; she is also a "king's *daughter.*" Her birth is royal also: her husband need not be in this respect ashamed of her: as it is said in Hebrews (ii. 11), "For both He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are *all of one*"—from one, of one paternity,—"for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." They are born of God,—as to the *new* nature, born again; *He* was Son of God from the Virgin's womb, without taint of sin at all. Enough of difference here, one would think, to make Him ashamed to call them brethren; yet He is *not* ashamed. So the bride here has, as looked at from one side, kindred she must forget, and yet on the other side, as a king's daughter, is "all glorious within." The spiritual significance illumines the whole, and alone makes it worthy.

This guides as to the disputed meaning of "within." Is this within the palace, or within the litter that is conveying her, when she is "brought unto the king"? or is it "inwardly": is she all-glorious not merely externally, but within *herself?* Certainly the latter is the most consistent with the context. Is it not really most consistent with the use of the word itself, without any indication of the litter or house or palace? Whose palace? Not the king's: for her being brought to him follows this. Her father's, say Delitzsch and Moll, or her own chamber, before she is brought forth. If so, it is mere scenery, too much imported into the word to gain so little.* Spiritually there is no gain at all: "the king's daughter" leads us naturally to think of what she is herself spiritually, to which the clothing with its interweavings of gold, as glory put *upon* what is already in *itself* glorious, is most perfectly suited. This clothing may be identical with the "embroidery" in which she is brought to the king; or is it possible that the reference here may be, as in psalm cxxxix. 15 it certainly is, to the body "curiously wrought" or "embroidered" (the same word) in its variegated structure of muscles and vessels and nerves, an organic web which may well picture the more wondrous interlacing of faculties and powers in the spirit-

* Cheyne, as common with him, escapes by a correction. He follows Krochmal in turning *penimah*, "within," into *peninim*, and reading—"of *pearls* in ouches of gold is her clothing."

(iii.) In the house.
(iv.) order established in the earth.
(v.) the end reached.

With [k]gladness and rejoicing do they [l]stream in:
they are brought into the [m]palace of the king.
Instead of thy [n]fathers thou shalt have [o]children:
thou shalt make them [p]princes in all the earth.
I will make mention of thy [q]name in [r]all generations:
therefore shall the [s]peoples praise thee for [t]ever and aye.

k *cf.* Is. 54. 1-3.
l *cf.* Is. 60. 8-10. *cf.* Mi. 4. 1, 2.
m *cf.* Mt. 25. 34.
n *cf.* Ps. 22. 30, 31.
o *cir.* Ps. 44. 1. Is. 54. 13.
p *cf.* Deu. 28. 13.
q Mal. 1. 11.
r Ps. 72. 17.
s Ps. 67.
t Ps. 72. 7. *cf.* Is. 65. 17-19.

Ps. xlvi.

[u]PSALM XLVI.

The test of experience,—the God of Jacob.

To the chief musician: [a psalm] of the sons of Korah. A song upon [u] Alamoth.

1(1-3): Divine sufficiency.
(i.) a *present* help.
(ii.) confirmation of heart.

GOD is our [v]refuge and [w]strength:
a very [x]present help in straits.
Therefore will we not [y]fear though the [z]earth be removed,
and the [a]mountains be carried into the heart of the seas.

u 1 Chr. 15. 20.
v Ps. 142. 5.
w Isa. 25. 4.
x Isa. 43. 2. *cf.* Zech. 14. 1-3.
y *cf.* Is. 35. 4.
z *cf.* Is. 24. 17-23.
a *cf.* Rev. 6. 14; Isa. 54. 10.

ual part? How will the perfect being at last show the painstaking care of God in a marvelous piece of handiwork—a creature that shall glorify Him in its mere existence for ever and ever!

The virgins that follow her, her companions, I have again a difficulty in interpreting according to the polygamous relationships of ancient times. Israel's exaltation to a special place of blessing and nearness to her heavenly King seems rather to discountenance than favor such application; while the joy that is awakened among the nations of the earth may well account for the queen's "companions." Nor do I forget, in the moral difficulty suggested, that the wives of David and others are plainly typical of Messianic or divine relationships; the evil being in no wise sanctioned by this overruling of them for good. All that is different, as it seems to me, from what is implied in current interpretations here, and that just because, were they necessarily to be received, they *would* seem, in a psalm such as the present, to imply some real sanction of polygamy itself, and not a mere toleration of it. Difficulties there are as to this in other connections, and here is not the place to attempt explanation: they must be looked at as we come to them. In this place the interpretation in this way seems more than disputable.

The fruit of Messiah's union with Israel is found in rulers established in all the earth. And the psalm ends with the mention of the blessed King to be in their mouth throughout all generations, and, through this, eternal praise from the subject peoples.

Psalm XLVI.

The forty-sixth psalm is a psalm of experience,—a joyful utterance of heart in view of conflict ended and the earth at rest; and in the clear apprehension of the grace that is in the God of Jacob—a God who can take up and glorify Himself in the poverty and weakness and failure of the creature. It is perfectly simple in its meaning, as it is joyous and bright in expression; the repetition of the seventh verse as the conclusion of the whole matter showing where the emphasis is to be laid.

There are three points: the first, the strong expression of the divine sufficiency and of confidence in it: the second, the testimony of the deliverance which shows the safety at all times of the city of God; the third sees God's glory accomplished in it, all that exalts itself against Him being swept away; ending with this refrain that Jehovah of hosts is Jacob's God; He is with us: the entrance into an unspeakable joy.

(iii.) The actual state.

The waters thereof [b] roar and foam,
[and] the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

2 (4-7): The deliverance.
(i.) provision of blessing.
(ii.) preservation.

There is a [c] river, the streams whereof make glad the [d] city of God:
the sanctuary of the [e] tabernacles of the [f] Most High.
God is in the [g] midst of her; she shall not be moved:
God shall [h] help her at early morn.

(iii.) realized.

The nations [i] raged, the kingdoms were moved:
he [j] uttered his voice, the earth melted.

(iv.) the experience of Jacob.

[k] Jehovah of hosts is with us:
the God of [l] Jacob is a high place for us. Selah.

3 (8-11): God glorified.
(i.) in acts of power.

Come, behold the [m] deeds of Jehovah:
the [n] desolations he hath made in the earth.
He maketh [o] wars to cease to the end of the earth:
he [p] breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear asunder;
he burneth the chariots in the fire.

(ii.) the war against war.

b *cf.* Lk. 21. 25.
c *cf.* Gen. 2. 10. *cf.* Ps. 36. 8. *cf.* Ezek. 47. 1-5.
d Ps. 48. 1. Isa. 60. 14.
e Ezek. 37. 26, 27.
f Ps. 47. 2.
g Isa. 12. 6. Ezek. 48. 35.
h Zeph. 3. 15-17. *cf.* Mal. 4. 2, 3.
i Ps. 2. 1. Rev. 19. 19.
j Isa. 30. 30, 31. Hab. 3. 2-6.
k *cf.* Zech. 8. 23. ver. 11.
l Isa. 41. 14.
m Ps. 66. 5.
n *cf.* Isa. 25. 1-5.
o *cf.* Mi. 4. 1-4.
p Ezek. 39. 9, 10; Josh. 11. 6.

The psalm is a "song upon Alamoth," which means, no doubt, "with maidens' [voices]," and may well remind us of Miriam and the women of Israel in their accompaniment of Moses' song of triumph at the Red Sea (Ex. xv.). Or as the sixty-eighth psalm: "the Lord gave the word; great was the company of the [women] that published it. Kings' armies did flee apace; and she that tarried at home divided the spoil." Good cause is there for such praise as this from delivered Israel; and the particular word here used, which is in its primitive sense the "hidden ones," and refers to those hidden as yet in the seclusion of their father's house, may well be applied to the remnant of godly ones who become at last the nation, brought out of their obscurity and owned by their King as His.

1. The first section then here expresses their entire confidence in the divine sufficiency. This has been tested by experience and amply proved. "God is our refuge and strength," is the happy cry; "a very present help in straits." They are bold in utterance of this: "therefore will we not fear though the earth be removed, and the mountains be carried into the heart of the seas." And the actual state of things which they look back upon might have seemed (morally at least) to indicate such engulfing of another deluge: "the waters roar and foam; and the mountains shake with the swelling thereof."

2. But this is past, and only revived in memory, to contrast with it the present condition of things. The threatening floods are gone: in their stead is a glorious river, whose divided streams in many channels make glad the city of God. Jerusalem, blessed with the abiding presence of the Supreme, cannot lack the nurture of grace, the vivifying streams of His blessed Spirit. God in the midst of her is abundant security; she shall not be moved: God shall help her at early morn. And so we know the day cannot come for the earth, but to usher it in Israel must get their blessing. And this is what has actually taken place: "The nations raged; the kingdoms were moved; He uttered His voice,—the earth melted." Yes, "Jehovah of hosts is with us": all things then, moving at His bidding, are for us also. Spite of folly and frailty, such is His grace: He is the God of grace,—"the God of Jacob is our refuge."

3. And He has glorified Himself, and will. The desolations of the earth are witness of His right hand of power. Edom (Isa. xxxiv.) and Babylon (xiii. 20), as lands that have nurtured His enemies, will be thus condemned to desolation.

(iii.) the soul in the sanctuary.

(iv.) the experience of Jacob.

Be [q]still, and know that I am God:
I will be [r]exalted among the nations;
I will be exalted in the earth.
[s]Jehovah of hosts is with us:
the God of Jacob is a high place for us. Selah.

[q] Ex. 14. 13.
[r] Isa. 2. 17–19.
[s] ver. 7.

Ps. xlvii.

[t]PSALM XLVII.

"The peoples of the God of Abraham."

To the chief musician: a psalm of the sons of Korah.

1 (1-5): The supremacy of Israel.

(i.) the shout of a King.

(ii.) the argument.

(iii.) the manifestation.

(iv.) the inheritance of Jacob.

(v.) the end.

ALL ye [u]peoples, [v]clap your hands:
shout unto God with the voice of triumph.
For Jehovah [w]Most High is to be feared:
a great King over all the earth.
He [x]subdueth the peoples under us,
and the races [of men] under our feet.
He chooseth for us our [y]inheritance,
the excellency of Jacob whom he [z]loved. Selah.
God is [a]gone up with shouting:
Jehovah with trumpet-sound.

[t] Ps. 100. 1,2.
[u] Ps. 97. 1.
[v] Ps. 50. 14.
[w] *cf.* Ps. 18. 39–43.
[x] *cf.* Ezek. 47. 13–21.
[y] Deut. 4. 37. 38. Deu. 10. 15.
[z] *cf.* Nu. 23. 21. *cf.* Josh. 6. 5, 20.

He will make war against war, and the very implements of it shall exist no more. Blessed display of power, which shall everywhere make Him known as God,—make the nations at last perforce to realize this, and exalt Him over the whole earth! For the God of hosts, the Unchangeable, who has shown Himself thus for Israel, is after all the God of grace,—the God of Jacob.

Psalm XLVII.

"The peoples of the God of Abraham" give us, I believe, the character of the forty-seventh psalm, which is a suited *fifth* psalm thus, as showing the peoples in connection with God. These are, of course, more than simply the nation of Israel, who naturally occupy the foreground of the picture. Their pre-eminence is strongly insisted on in the first part; but the second shows the praise that their praise awakens in the hearts of the people around made ready by divine grace. The promise is thus made good to Abraham; and he by his faith becomes the "father of many nations." It is not, as in the last psalm, simply that power humbles and subdues, so that men are forced to submit. While that will be true as to many, here is another and a sweeter compulsion. Divine love works and has its way; and God sits upon a throne in this way for which Christ has wrought, and which is the fruit of His work.

1. These "peoples," then, are exhorted at the beginning (in an anticipative way, characteristic of the beginnings of psalms, as we have seen) to clap their hands and shout unto God with a voice of triumph: for Jehovah, now manifestly the Supreme, is to be feared—with no slavish fear, as the words preceding show: He is a great King over all the earth.

Israel it is whose voice is heard here; and in Israel it is that He has manifested His power,—yea, His grace and truth: for He has come in in fulfillment of many promises, and had mercy upon those of old His people. "He subdueth the peoples under us, and the nations under our feet. He chooseth [also] our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob, whom He loved." Jacob is the suited name all through here, failing, crippled Jacob, saved then not for his own "excellency", though his inheritance be excellent or exalted—better than any other upon earth.

It is accomplished; the work is done: He who came down to the visitation of the earth, has gone up again to His throne over all: He "is gone up with a shout: Jehovah with trumpet-sound." It is the sound of recall from the battle-

2 (6-9): The testimony of Israel.
(i.) psalm to God the King.
(ii.) psalm for instruction.
(iii.) the holy throne.
(iv.) the earth at large.

[a] Psalm unto God, psalm!
psalm to our King, psalm!
For God is [b] King of all the earth:
psalm ye an instruction.
God reigneth over the nations:
God [c] sitteth on the throne of his holiness.
The [d] willing-hearted of the peoples are gathered together,—
the people of the God of Abraham;
for the [e] shields of the earth [belong] unto God:
he is [f] greatly exalted.

a Ps. 81. 1, 2.
b Ps. 45. 1, 6. Ps. 97. 1.
c Ps. 89. 14.
d *cf.* Ps. 110. 3.
e Ps. 33. 20. *cf.* Isa. 4. 5.
f Ps. 108. 5.

field, because the victory is won. The first part of the psalm is therefore here complete.

2. But this only leaves room for a new movement which now begins. The newly-restored nation bursts out with exultant praises, to which one excites another: "Psalm unto God, psalm! psalm to our King, psalm! For God is King of all the earth: psalm ye an *instruction.*" The last word is one that we were considering in the thirty-second psalm—"a *maskil*"; and we have seen that there are a number of these maskil psalms, but for instruction, it would appear, in Israel itself, before the time of their deliverance is reached. The psalm now urged would seem, on the other hand, in accordance with the character of what is here, an instruction of the nations. It is not a strange thought in Scripture: "teaching and admonishing one another," says the apostle, "*in psalms* and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. iii. 16). Joy in the Lord out of one's own heart is in fact a most effectual teaching and admonition of others; and this Israel delivered and restored to God will find. The wave of blessing and praise will flow outward from its centre in Zion, winning hearts on every side to join in it; while *holiness*, manifest in His dealings as to sin, will be the theme, no less than grace—but nothing is holier than grace, —and make the joy deep and serious. "God reigneth over the nations: God sitteth upon the throne of His holiness." Now we see the response: "the willing-hearted of the peoples are gathered together"—grace is gathering them, as is plain; faith has taken effect in their hearts; they are unitedly thus "the (one) people of the God of Abraham." The closing words of the psalm ("the shields of the earth belong unto God")—though there is difficulty in them—look like an allusion to that assurance to Abraham, given just before the promise: "Fear not, Abraham; I am thy *shield*, and thy exceeding great reward." Now the shield has grown into many shields,—the protective screens from danger which, whatever may be their nature, all are to be ascribed to Him.

Thus the earth rests: God is known in His power, known in His truth, in His holiness, in His goodness to man. Men look up joyfully, reverently, with worship in their hearts to Him: "HE is greatly exalted." Amen.

Psalm XLVIII.

We have now the celebration of the final victory over the enemies of Israel, which leaves them in peace and gladness to realize the goodness of God, according to all that they had heard from their fathers of His works of old. The victory is plainly that of Ezek. xxxviii., and not the deliverance of Zech. xiv., which precedes it. In the one case the city is in the extreme of distress, already partly in the enemy's hands, and on the brink of ruin, when the Lord interferes. Clearly it is not yet the glorious city of God, of which this psalm speaks, but in the misery which is the result of sin and departure from Him. It is saved by the appearing of Christ from heaven, the triumph of the enemy turned into defeat and overthrow. We should naturally conclude that this would be the end of all attempts of this kind; but our conclusions are often mistaken, even when we.

Ps. xlviii.

[6]PSALM XLVIII.

The victory over the last confederacy.

A Song: a psalm of the sons of Korah.

1 (1-3): The city of God.
(i.) where He Himself is.
(ii.) relationships.

[g]GREAT is Jehovah, and greatly to be praised
in the [h]city of our God, his holy hill.
Beautiful in elevation, the [i]joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion,
[on] the sides of the [j]north, the city of the [k]great King.

(iii.) a manifest God.

God is known in her palaces
as a [l]high place.

2 (4-7): The conflict.
(i.) the gathering of the kings.
(ii.) arrested.

For lo, the [m]kings were assembled:
they passed by together.
They saw, [and] so they marveled:
they were put in a hurry of fear, they started to [n]flee.

g Ps. 47. 2.
h Ps. 46. 4. Ps. 87. Zech. 8. 3.
i Isa. 65. 18, 19. Ps. 122. 3,4.
j Isa. 14. 13. Jer. 1. 13,14.
k Mat. 5. 35.
l Ps. 46. 1.
m *cf.* Ezek. 38. 1-17.
n *cf.* Ezek. 38. 18-23. *cf.* Ezek. 39. 1-7. *cf.* Isa. 37. 33-38.

think them quite secure. The attack of Gog as prophesied in Ezekiel is against the "land that is brought back from the sword and gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel which have been constantly"—not "always"—"waste, but is brought forth out of the nations, and they dwell safely, all of them." Here the state of things is quite different from that pictured in Zechariah; and correspondingly there is no hint of any disaster to the people of God, but the contrary: when he comes up against the land of Israel, the Lord says, "my fury shall come up in my face, . . . and I will call for a sword against him through all my mountains." So in the psalm here: the glorious city of God, strong in the might of Him who dwells in her, laughs the invader to scorn. The kings see, and marvel, and are smitten with fear and overthrown. All the circumstances are in this way different.

1. The first section here therefore begins with the celebration of the city of God, the place where He dwells, His holy mountain. The numerical structure indicates, I doubt not, the blessed unity which the city, indwelt of God, manifests. What a contrast to the strife and corruption hitherto found in her at the best of times! Now she is the home of peace and concord, man fitted to man in the realization of that sweet mutual dependence and ministry of each to each which God has ordained to His creatures for their blessing and comfort and moral invigoration. So in the heavens the home of the redeemed is again a city, the new Jerusalem, "Jerusalem which is above," the "city which hath foundations,"—those glorious foundations of light-jewels, Urim and Thummim, the Lights and Perfections of God Himself; and which abides therefore as surely as He abides.

Where He is, there is unity,—intelligent subjection to Him in love, whereby each being occupies his own place in ceaseless activity of service without weariness. And great is Jehovah here, and greatly to be praised. No wonder that this city, beautiful in its elevation, spiritually as physically, should be the joy of the whole earth. It is Mount Zion, the "fixed" place of Jehovah's rest (see 2 Sam. v. 7, *notes*). There shall be no more alienation from Him, no more Jebusite treading down of holy places forever. Who shall disturb the place of *His* rest?

"On the sides of the north," adds to this great significance. There is no need to quarrel with any topographical reference that may be suggested, for the typical meaning never displaces the literal and external, but shines through it, and gives it beauty and enforcement. We must not make matter the enemy, but the servant and shrine of the Spirit. Let Mount Zion be actually and literally on the sides of the north, this is the beautiful symbol of a deeper reality. The

(iii.) seized with fear.
(iv.) the breach.

Trembling possessed them there:
[o] anguish as of a woman in travail.
With an east wind
thou [p] breakest the ships of Tarshish.

3 (8-11): Realization.
(i.) the city eternal.
(ii.) divine love.
(iii.) praise according to His Name.
(iv.) the exhortation of experience.

As we have [q] heard, so we have seen,
in the city of Jehovah of hosts,
in the city of our God:
God will [r] establish it for ever. Selah.
We have thought of thy [s] lovingkindness, O God:
in the midst of thy temple.
According to thy [t] name, O God, so is thy praise
to the [u] ends of the earth:
thy right hand is full of righteousness.
Let Mount Zion [v] rejoice, let the daughters of Judah exult:
because of thy judgments.

4 (12-14): Make full proof.
(i.) survey her as a whole.

[w] Walk about Zion, and go round about her:
number her towers.

o *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 2, 3.
p Isa. 2. 16.
q *cf.* Ki. 10. 6, 7.
r Ps. 87. 1, 5.
s Ps. 103. 4.
t *cf.* 1 Ki. 8. 41-43.
u *cf.* Ps. 22. 27.
v Zech. 2.10. Zeph. 3. 14.
w *cf.* Gen. 13. 17.

north—*tzaphon*—is "what is hidden," because the north side of anything is the dark, the hidden side. The north therefore is the place of mystery, and of opposition to the light, and "God is light." From the mysterious in nature, the mysteries of God's providence, the clouds and darkness which are round about His throne,—full as all these must be of His wisdom and goodness really,—infidelity derives its arguments, and with these makes its attacks upon the truth of God. In the sides of the north therefore it is that the Babylonian scoffer means to sit (Isa. xiv. 13) in defiance of the Most High. But here now Mount Zion stands, God's bulwark against the foe, who is (let us note) a *northern* foe. God opposes to him the grace of His promise, His immutable word, Himself, in short, as that against which the wave of national madness must first break, and break itself to pieces.

And how grandly Mount Zion rises "on the sides of the north," the answer at last to all the mystery of God's dealings with His people, the fulfillment of promise, the sign of peace for the earth itself; God's ways now to be open, in the sight of men, day having succeeded to night, sight (in some sense) to faith; Jerusalem now the city of the great King, for whom the expectant ages have been looking. Yes, God is known in her palaces as a high place,—Zion itself His symbol.

2. Now the brief passage of the storm-cloud is recited,—how the kings assembled, how in their collective might they passed and were gone! They but looked and marveled, and in the haste of fear started to flee. Fear seized upon them, the pangs of a woman in travail; and then sudden shipwreck, as of vessels broken with an east wind.

3. Zion emerges in her beauty from under this passing cloud. She is untouched. And now they realize in the present what they had in faith received from their fathers as to the days of old. As they had heard, so now they have seen, in the city of Jehovah of hosts as it truly is: God establishes it forever. In the sanctuary of His presence restored to them, they think upon His love. His praise is now, even to the ends of the earth, in accordance with His Name,—that is, with the revelation of Himself. Power has acted in righteousness so as to declare what His right hand is. Experience may well exhort them to exultant joy.

4. The next verses, while easy to understand on the whole, are difficult to particularize. They are urged to make full proof of this city of strength: survey her as a whole, I take it,—consider her points,—to tell it to the generations

(II.) her parts.

(III.) God so displayed is our God.

Mark well her [x]bulwarks;
consider her [y]palaces:
that ye may tell it to the [z]generation following.
For this God is our God for [a]ever and aye:
he will be our guide evermore.*

[x] *cf.* Isa. 26. 1. *cf.* Isa. 60. 18.
[y] Ps. 45. 15.
[z] Ps. 78. 4.
[a] Ps. 72. 8.

Ps. xlix.

[t]PSALM XLIX.

Completed histories.

To the chief musician, a psalm of the sons of Korah.

1 (I–4): A prime truth.

(I.) a lesson for all.

(II.) in the most opposite conditions.

(III.) "holiness of truth."

(IV.) In the language of experience.

HEAR this, all ye [b]peoples:
give ear, all ye [c]dwellers in time!†
Both men of [d]low and men of high degree,‡
[e]rich and poor together!
My [f]mouth speaketh wisdom,§
and the [g]meditation of my heart is discernment. §
I incline mine ear to [h]proverbial speech:
I will propound my deep saying on the [i]harp.

[b] *ctr.* Ps. 47. 1.
[c] Ps. 39. 4, 5. Jas. 4 14.
[d] *cf.* Ex. 11. 5. *cf.* Isa. 2.9.
[e] Prov. 22.2.
[f] *cf.* Ps. 45.1. Prov. 8. 6.
[g] Ps. 19. 14.
[h] Ps. 78. 2. Prov.1.1-6.
[i] *cf.*Ps.101.1.

* A difference only of pointing from the common reading, as to which MSS. more or less differ, and expositors decidedly. That given is found in the LXX., and is one of three suggested in the Jerusalem Talmud.
† Or "transitory world," *cheled;* comp. Ps. xvii. 14.
‡ "Sons of Adam, and sons of Ish."
§ Literally, "wisdoms," "discernments."

afterwards. For the God who has taken all this abundant care for His people, such as He has shown Himself in it, is their God forever,—the guide of His flock forever. This is the glorious portion of His people, a portion which, after all measurements, remains unmeasured.

Psalm XLIX.

The last psalm of this series is an inspired "psalm of life," completed, as only revelation could complete it, by a glance at what is beyond this. Thus the folly is apparent which makes the incomplete story all, and in the face of incontrovertible facts, lives as if death were not, and time were eternity.

We must remember, however, that we are still in Israel, and that we have neither resurrection nor a heavenly portion presented, although one verse at first sight does seem to give the former. But it speaks rather of the delivered people as represented by the psalmist himself, their enemies being destroyed, and the "morning" of the millennial day brought in by the uprising of the "Sun of righteousness" (Mal. iv.) and dominion given to the "upright." This is the completion of the story on that side, as death with its Sheol mystery is on the other. In neither case have we resurrection.

1. The first section calls all people to hear a truth which has, in the events depicted in previous psalms, received a striking commentary. The psalmist characterizes those he addresses according to what is his theme in it, as dwellers in time. Whatever their various conditions, this is a condition common to all, and bringing all to more equality than commonly apprehended. He premises that he has "wisdoms"—fullness of wisdom—to communicate; and that it is not a mere message, but what has been the meditation of his own heart, and is personal discernment (once more a plural). He uses "proverbial speech," such as his own ear has been attentive to, and the accompaniment of the harp to propound his deep sayings—nature being in fact in harmonious accord with all he utters.

2. The rest of the psalm is, of course, the deep saying itself. It is divided into two equal parts, both ending in a similar refrain. The first gives the false confidence of man which leaves him ashamed at last, transparently the dupe of

2 (5-12): Confidence that makes ashamed.
(i.) a right independence.
(ii.) false confidence of the rich.
(iii.) manifested.
(iv.) universal failure.
(v.) in view of divine government.
(vi.) man's limit.
(vii.) at rest here.
(viii.) the turn of the page.
3 (13-20): Realized portions.
(i.) men all one in folly.

[j] Why should I fear in days of evil,
[when] the perverseness of those that would [k] trip me up encircleth me?
They that [l] rely upon their wealth,
and boast themselves in the abundance of their riches,—
None can by any means [m] redeem his brother,
[nor] give unto God a ransom for him:—
(For the redemption of their soul is [n] costly,
and must be [o] let alone for ever:)
So that he should [p] live on perpetually,
[and] not see corruption.
For one seeth that [q] wise men die:
likewise the [r] fool and the brutish perish,
and abandon their wealth to [s] others.
Their [t] inward thought is that their houses shall be for ever,
[and] their dwellings from generation to generation:
they call the [u] lands after their own names.
And man lodgeth not the night in [v] honor:
he is like the [w] beasts that perish.

This their way is their [x] folly:
and they that come after them [y] approve their sayings.* Selah.

* Literally, "mouth."

j Ps. 3. 6. Ps. 27. 1.
k Ps. 10. 9. Ps. 38. 12.
l Prov. 11. 28. Mk. 10. 24. cf. 1 Tim. 6. 17.
m cf. 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. cf. Mi. 6. 6-8. Job 36. 18, 19.
n cf. Mt. 16. 26.
o cf. Lk. 16. 27-31. Eccl. 8. 8.
p cf. Gen. 2. 17 with Rom. 5. 12. Ps. 89. 48.
q Eccl. 2. 15, 16.
r cf. Lk. 12. 13-21.
s Ps. 39. 6. Eccl. 2. 18, 19, 26. Jer. 17. 11.
t Lk. 12. 17.
u Gen. 4. 17. ctr. Ps. 103. 5, 16.
v ver. 20. cf. Ps. 82. 6, 7.
w cf. Eccl. 3. 18-20.
x cf. Prov. 12. 15. cf. Prov. 14. 12.
y cf. 1 Cor. 15. 32.

his own perversity. The last contrasts it with the reality for sinner and for saint.

He begins with a question, which is answered by what follows to the end of the psalm. If man with all his self-confidence is yet the poor creature which this represents, why then should he be afraid in days of evil, though encircled by the perversity of those that would trip him up? Thus it is a psalm of cheer and encouragement for a day that is not yet over when he utters it. The deliverance is not accomplished; but it is assured, and about to come. Faith predicts it and the destruction of the wicked,—inspired by the morality of nature itself, which proclaims throughout the judgment of sin and the triumph of righteousness. Folly is not wisdom, and cannot be followed by the effects of wisdom. He sees easily through these men of abundant resources, confident in what is so manifestly incompetent as against the might of that death which baffles them all. God in His holy government has ordained this for one only possible reason —sin. Let any one of these throw his shield about his brother, and give God a ransom for him, so that he may perpetuate his precious life. Plainly he cannot; it is too costly: he must let that alone forever. He sees and knows, himself,—every one does,—that as to wise and fools alike death knows no difference, makes no exception. It is the point of Ecclesiastes, there greatly enlarged on: a simple, obvious matter indeed, but which makes more astonishing the willful blindness which permits men to dwell securely in possessions held on such a tenure, and call the solid earth by the names of its passing generations. The wheel turns, and they are shaken from it. Man does not, as a rule, lodge for the little night that belongs to him, in honor. He passes, and goes down to silence like the beast.

3. Follow him now to the other side,—where is he? what of his senseless say-

(ii.) contrasted with their destruction in death.

Like sheep they are laid in [z]Sheol:
[a]death tendeth them;
and the [b]upright shall rule over them in the [c]morning;
and their form shall be for Sheol to [d]consume,
so that it shall have [e]no habitation.

(iii.) the redemption of the saint.

But God will redeem [f]my soul from the hand of Sheol:
for he shall [g]receive me. Selah.

(iv.) testing.

Be not [h]afraid, when one is made rich,
because the glory of his house [i]increaseth;

(v.) the end.

For when he dieth he shall [j]carry away naught:
his glory shall not descend after him.

(vi.) evil that comes short.

Though in life he [k]blessed himself;*
and [men] will [l]praise thee because thou doest good to [m]thyself.

(vii.) the end that perfects it.

[His soul] goeth to the generation of his [n]fathers:
no more shall they see [o]light.

(viii.) the turn of the page.

Man that is in [p]honor and [q]understandeth not,
is like the [r]beasts that perish.

* Literally, "his soul."

o Ps. 56. 13. p ver. 12. q De. 32. 29. r Eccl. 3. 19; cf. 2 Pet. 2. 12.

z cf. Lk. 16. 22, 23. ctr. Ps. 16. 10.
a cf. Isa. 38. 18. cf. Ezek. 32. 20-23.
b Ps. 37. 34. cf. Dan. 7. 22.
cf. Ps. 149. 6-9.
c cf. 2 Sam. 23. 4 with Mal. 4. 2.
d Ps. 37. 20.
e Job 4. 19-21.
f Ps. 116. 8, 9. Hos. 13. 14.
g cf. Ps. 91. 14-16.
h cf. Ps. 37. 1, etc.
i Ps. 37. 35.
j Job 27. 16-19. 1 Tim. 6. 7. Eccl. 5. 15.
k De. 29. 19.
l ver. 13.
m ctr. Rom. 14. 8, 9.
n 1 Ki. 14. 31, etc.

ings, which yet those who follow him—before whose eyes he passes away—approve! They all like sheep with meek subjection are made to lie down in Sheol; death is the shepherd tending there, and in the morning (after the night of death) no deliverance is there for them: it is the day of dominion for the upright. For them, their very form wastes under the sway of Sheol, so as to find no habitation.

Sheol and the grave are not here confounded: the one is as distinctly the recipient of the soul, as the other is of the body. But Sheol having mastered and retaining the soul, this necessarily entails the wasting destruction of the form that is left behind, so that by and by it needs no habitation. Yet they had thought their dwelling-places should be forever! they—themselves soon to need none!

On the other hand the psalmist professes for himself his confidence: God shall redeem his soul from the power of Sheol: words which, no doubt, would apply to resurrection for those going down to death; but the connection seems rather to show the application to the deliverance of living men from that which might seem to have had them in its grip,—a hold marvelously and miraculously loosened. The further words "for He shall receive me" have been urged in behalf of resurrection, as being used of Enoch when "God *took** him." But the word is of various use, and by itself could decide nothing: the occurrence in Psalm lxxiii. 24, ("and afterwards receive me to glory,") is perhaps really the most favorable to this view; but it needs to be examined in its connection there. The context in fact, in all cases, is that which will be found to have controlling influence upon interpretation. A largeness belongs to Scripture in such matters which will leave room (and was surely intended to leave room) for application to both Jewish and Christian verities, and these in more ways than one. Those who "are alive and remain to the coming of the Lord," and of whom Enoch is a real type, will be caught up without seeing death, to meet the Lord in the air. They will surely be "redeemed from the power of Sheol" and received by God, as fully as any that go into it; and so with Jewish saints of similar classes.

* *Laqach*, "receive" and "take."

After this outburst of glowing confidence, the moralizing of the psalm subsides to its lower and accustomed level. Riches give a transitory glory: death dispossesses the owner of it all. Alas, the effect may not be transient; life with this brilliancy about it tends to dazzle the eyes doubly—to what is beyond and what is around alike. Every way shut up within the narrowest limits, man is ignorant of these, blesses himself, and is praised by others. He passes to the generation of his fathers, his taper-light quenched with theirs, never to revive. Alas! "Man that is in honor, and understanding not, is like the beasts that perish."

Sec. 2.

After the full external deliverance thus accomplished, we have the complete internal salvation. Sin is searched out, challenged and confessed, so that there is moral clearance. The two psalms which are brought together in this section are easily seen to be, as in other cases of such pairs, largely a contrast. In the first, God proclaims His righteousness; in the second, man confesses his sin. There is perfect moral harmony, while it is a harmony of opposite things. It is plainly needed, this complete clearance of the moral question, in order that the salvation itself may be complete; and the two sections are similarly in contrast as these psalms are, and with the same fundamental unity. Thus the first subdivision of the book is filled and rounded to a perfect close.

PSALM L.

In the fiftieth psalm there are two things emphasized: the righteousness of the Judge, and the righteousness required by Him. God Himself, in a world fallen away from Him, has come into question; and no heart amongst mere men, but has more or less admitted the question. In fact the perfect settlement of this on man's part would be his own perfect restoration to God and complete ability to walk with Him. It would mean absolute faith in God; and faith is that which accomplishes the whole work in man, working by love and purifying the heart. Faith enthrones God on an absolute throne, and yields up to Him all the faculties and powers of the whole being. The fall began with a question of God; and Satan, who first uttered it, knew well its fatal import. Man, entertaining it, lost, with his confidence in Him, his place of dependence, and became necessarily a seeker of his own things, an assertor of his own will, the slave only of his captor who beguiles him by the lusts awakened within him. The disorder produced by the sin which has come in adds to his questions about the government of One who is "far above, out of his sight;" and so the mind works with the heart to increase his alienation.

We need not wonder, then, that in the working of God to bring back the soul to Him, a first point should be to make the soul realize the just judgment of its sin,—the righteousness of God who judges it. Only here it must be noticed that already, for those called to do so at this time, deliverance has come in; God's heart has been already told out in a wonderful salvation which has filled their hearts with joy and their tongues with praise. It is "out of Zion, the perfection of beauty," God's glory shines. Yet they still need the full searching out which here they find. They need apparently also as yet the knowledge of atonement; but this we do not find in the present psalm, and we shall examine it in its evident place in connection with the next one.

It would seem also certain by this psalm that there will be a sessional judgment in Israel, after the appearing of Christ, answering to that among the Gentiles which the Lord pictures in Matt. xxv. Here, too, among the people just delivered, there will be "goats"—the wicked—to put upon His left side, and separate from those really His. This the fourth section of the psalm surely intimates, though it be true that there is difficulty in constructing prophetical details out of psalms which are yet clearly prophetical.

This psalm is not one of the Korahite series: that is ended. The singer now is Asaph, "the gatherer," from a word used for the gathering of fruit and also

SECTION 2. (Ps. l., li.)

The testimony of God and the confession of man.

Ps. l.

[1]PSALM L.

A righteous God requiring righteousness.

A psalm of [s]Asaph.

1 (1-6): The summons of God.
(i) a universal call.
(ii.) of One in relationship.
(iii.) His Presence in holiness.
(iv.) the testing of man.
(v. of those in covenant with Him.
(vi.) overcoming in judgment.

THE [t]Mighty One, [u]God, [v]Jehovah, hath spoken,
and called the earth from the [w]rising of the sun
to the going down thereof.
Out of [x]Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath
shined.
Our God doth [y]come, and shall not keep silence:
[z]fire devoureth before him;
and it is very tempestuous round about him.
He calleth to the [a]heavens from above,
and to the earth, to [b]judge his people.
Gather my [c]saints* together unto me:
those that have [d]made† covenant with me by sacrifice.
And the [e]heavens declare his righteousness:
for God is judge himself. Selah.

* *Chasidim*, "pious ones." † Literally, "cut."

[s] 1 Chr. 16. 4, 5, 7. Ps. 73-83, titles.
[t] Is. 9. 6. Jer. 32. 18.
[u] Ps. 46. 10, etc.
[v] Ps. 48. 1.
[w] Ps. 113. 3. Isa. 59. 19. Mal. 1. 11.
[x] Ps. 48. 2. *cf.r.* Lam. 2. 15.
[y] Ps. 96. 10-13.
[z] Ps. 9. 3. Hab. 3. 5. *cf.* 2 Thess. 1. 8.
[a] Deu. 30. 19. Deu. 32. 1. Isa. 1. 2. Jer. 2. 12. Jer. 6. 19.
[b] Deu. 32. 36. Heb. 10. 30.
[c] *cf.* Deu. 7. 6. Deu. 33. 3.
[d] *cf.* Gen. 15. 9-13. *cf.* Jer. 34. 18, 19.
[e] *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 21 with Eph. 2. 7. Ps. 97. 6.

of men (as ver. 5). Twelve psalms are ascribed to Asaph, whether this be the singer of David's time, or (as most think) his family be included under it. The character of these psalms is plain in a general way by the place occupied by the other eleven, at the commencement of the third or sanctuary-book. They are saturated indeed with the thought of God's *holiness;* and the character and position of the present psalms are perfectly similar. Holiness indeed is an absolute necessity for the gathering of God's people, if it is to be with Him; and that is a principle which this psalm declares.

1. We have in the first section of it the summons of God, who appears in full majesty. The Mighty One (*El*), God (*Elohim*), Jehovah, the Unchangeable,—and this we know to be His covenant-name with Israel,—summons the whole earth to hear His voice. He shines out of Zion, which He has chosen as the place of His rest, and which accordingly is blooming out for Him in bridal attire, "the perfection of beauty." Thus they can claim Him as their own God, who comes out of the sanctuary, and not to maintain silence. The fire of His holiness consumes before Him, and a tempest gathers around Him,—signs that show His holiness can not yet be exhibited in the serenity of complacent love. Nay, it is judgment for which He comes, and heaven and earth are summoned as His witnesses. Let His saints—those that are positionally that, at least,—be gathered unto Him: those who have covenanted by sacrifice to be His own. And the heavens shall declare His righteousness: for God Himself it is who is the Judge.

This gathering of covenanted saints is not, as some have suggested, the saints of the present time. This neither suits the character of the Psalms, nor the connection in this case. The "sacrifice" by which they have made a covenant with Him can hardly be the work of Christ upon the cross, while those spoken of a little later are plainly only the legal ones. Nor is it according to Scripture, and in conformity with the gospel, to speak of *our* making a covenant with God by the work of Christ. God has covenanted with *us* by it, if you please to use the expression; at least, the blessings of the new covenant are ours through the "blood of the covenant"; but that is not a covenant which has two parties to it, as its terms prove conclusively (Heb. viii. 10–12), but one alone. Those gath-

2 (7–13): The controversy negatively.
(i.) God Himself witnessing.
(ii.) not for legal service.
(iii.) nor as coveting their possessions.
(iv.) The God of creation.
(v.) with whom it all is.
(vi.) limit?
(vii.) the complete argument.

Hear, O my people, and I will speak;
O Israel, and I will testify concerning thee:
I am God, thy God.
Not for thy [f]sacrifices do I reprove thee:
nor as to thy burnt-offerings being continually before me.
I will not take a bullock out of thy house,
[nor] he-goats from thy folds.
For [g]every beast of the forest is mine,—
the cattle on a thousand hills.
I know all the [h]birds of the hills,
and that which moveth in the fields is with me.
If I were hungry, I would not tell thee:
for the [i]world is mine, and its fullness.
Am I an eater of bulls' flesh?
or shall I drink the [j]blood of goats?

[f] *cf.* Ps. 40. 6–8. Ps. 51. 16, 17. Mi. 6. 6, 7.
[g] 1 Chr. 29. 11–14. *cf.* Gen. 1. 24.
[h] *cf.* Gen. 6. 19–21.
[i] *cf.* 1 Ki. 17. 4–6. Ps. 24. 1. 1 Cor. 10. 26.
[j] *cf.* Heb. 9. 12–14.

3 (14,15): The heart of the matter.
(i.) as righteousness.
(ii.) consequent deliverance.

Sacrifice to God [k]thanksgiving,
and pay to the [l]Most High thy vows:
And [m]call upon me in the day of strait:
I will deliver thee, and thou shalt [n]glorify me.

[k] Ps. 95. 2. Ps. 116. 17.
[l] Ps. 46. 4.
[m] Ps. 91. 15. *cf.* Judges 3. 9.
[n] Ps. 116. 16. Ps. 30. 11, 12.

ered here are plainly those He calls His people in the seventh verse, and are Israel, gathered for judgment: that is, not for the execution of wrath upon them, but that He may plead with them as to their sin. And the "covenant by sacrifice" clearly refers to Exod. xxiv., when they had as a nation taken upon them to keep all the Lord's words, and the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled upon them. If the heavenly saints come into this psalm, it may be in the next verse, in a much more obscure, but more beautiful way. For "the heavens shall indeed declare His righteousness," when sinners like ourselves shall be seen through the manifestation of this in the cross, in their place in glory, "made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21). How the utter failure of man, and the righteousness of God, will be thus declared together, in grace more marvelous, and yet in principle the same as that shown in the deliverance and blessing of Israel in the day here contemplated!

2. But God's controversy with them must now be declared: the *legal* controversy, not yet as to the rejection of Christ, which we find however from another side in the psalm following. First, negatively, He declares what it is *not* about. It is not about their ritual services—peace-offerings or burnt-offerings. He desires no bullock or goat, no flocks or herds of theirs,—He to whom all that exist belong, and who is well acquainted with all His possessions. Were He, as this implied, limited as they, and hungry, why should the Owner of the world bring His wants to them to be satisfied? But did they really think Him an eater of bulls' flesh, or that He drank the blood of goats? What were they, in fact, who needed such arguments? But they are not conceptions too gross for men, as abundant testimony declares.

3. He goes on to the positive side: what He really sought was thanksgiving, the sign of conscious dependence, and of their realization of the bounties of His bounteous hand. A vow was of a higher character than an offering of thanksgiving (see Lev. vii. 11, *sq. notes*), as the expression of more positive faith in God under the pressure of circumstances. Here the distinct assertion which has been made of the non-requirement of sacrifice shows that it is the New Testament "sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving" upon which He insists; with which also must be joined that faith which must underlie this if it be real, which in the day of distress draws nearer to Him instead of wandering off in paths devised by one's own wisdom, or yielding to the pressure. The most encouraging assurance

4 (16-21): The failure in practical walk.
(i.) barren profession.
(ii.) with hatred of God's words.
(iii.) the real portion.
(iv.) practical conduct.
(v.) sin against the fifth commandment.
(vi.) the limit reached of God's restraint upon Himself.

But unto the [o] wicked God saith,
what hast thou to do with recounting my [p] statutes?
or that thou shouldst take my covenant into thy mouth?
Seeing thou hast [q] hated correction,
and cast my words behind thee?
When thou [r] sawest a thief, thou hadst pleasure in him;
and thy portion was with adulterers.
Thou hast let thy mouth loose in evil,
and thy [t] tongue frameth deceit.
Thou sittest [and] speakest against thy [t] brother:
against thy mother's son thou dealest out scandal.
These things thou diddest, and I kept [u] silence:
and thou thoughtest me just [v] like thyself;
[but] I will [w] reprove thee,
and set them in [x] array before thine eyes.

o *cf.* Lk. 13. 25-27.
p *cf.* Rom. 2. 17.
q Prov. 1. 24-30.
r Ps. 1. 1. Prov. 1. 10.
s *cf.* Ps. 52. 2.
t *cf.* Gen. 37. 4 with Rom. 9. 5. Ps. 69. 8.
u Is. 26. 10. Rom. 2. 4.
v Nu. 23. 19. *ctr.* Ps. 115. 4-8.
w Ps. 39. 11.
x Ps. 90. 8. *cf.* Mt. 25. 41-46.

is connected with this: "call upon Me in the day of strait: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me."

The legal sacrifices had not, of course, passed away in the psalmist's day; nor will those thus addressed in the future time to which this transports us, know how (as for us) the type has yielded to the antitype. This is really also, and necessarily, a looking back over the past time when Israel was fully under the legal covenant, and does not speak of change just initiated. What is insisted on is what always had been really the question,—what had always been in the heart of God for them: what in the sin-offering psalm comes out as to be the fruit of the cross, the Holy One inhabiting the praises of Israel. Could less than this possibly yield Him satisfaction?—the whole heart His, and the whole being filled with the joy of what it has found in Him.

4. The practical life will be as the heart is, and the second table of the law share the fortunes of the first. To this the Lord goes on therefore now. A barren profession may consist, alas, with hatred of correction and contemptuous rejection of the words of God; the heart finding its secret delight in that in which there may be no open indulgence, for there are fences put about men which may hinder this. The tongue will constantly be freer than the steps here, and show whereon the heart is set. Yet with a mouth let loose in evil, the tongue will cover this license with deceit. Nothing appears more like righteousness often, than what is really the voice of slander,—never far off from the ready proclamation of another's evil, while this is really thus rejoiced in. The slipping of the righteous is used as against righteousness, often to lower the standard of it practically, and favor that which is not this.*

All this going on under the eye of God, and with no interference upon His part, the patience of divine government comes to be misread as if it were indifference—misread, alas, not only on the side of the wicked, but the cause of gravest exercise on the part of the righteous also, sufferers under it. But the wicked readily believe it to be indifference; for it is as natural for wickedness to believe in wickedness, as it is for goodness to believe in goodness. The accusations made against the righteous are not thus always mere malice. The hypocrite comes easily to believe in the hypocrisy of others; the deceiver may make transparent honesty a mirror in which he only sees deceit. The world knew not

* This twentieth verse gives us in the plainest way the sin against the fifth commandment (of the second table of the law), and thus vindicates its numerical place as a *fifth* verse of the fourth section of the psalm. But I cannot characterize it further, and feel that this does not go to the root of the matter. Why is this fifth commandment such? Probably we have to learn more as to the symbolism of the number itself; as we have learned as to other numbers since this study of the Psalms began: their fullness of meaning is not exhausted yet.

5 (22, 23): the way and end.
(i.) the way of independence.
(ii.) the way of salvation.

Now consider this, ye forgetters of God*,
lest I [y]tear [you] in pieces, and there be none to deliver.
He that offereth [z]praise glorifieth me;
and to him that [a]ordereth his way will I show the [b]salvation of God.

[y] Mt. 24. 51.
[z] ver. 14.
[a] *cf.* Ps. 15. 2.
[b] Ps. 14. 7.

Ps. li.

[2]PSALM LI.

The confession of blood-guiltiness (nationally of the blood of Christ, under which they yet find salvation).

To the chief musician, a psalm of David: when [c]Nathan the prophet had come to him, after he had gone in to [d]Bathsheba.

[c] 2 Sam. 12. 1–14.
[d] 2 Sam. 11. *cf.* Mt. 1. 6.

1 (1–4): Conviction.
(i.) a plea for grace in consistency with Himself.

BE [e]gracious to me, O God, according to thy [f]loving-kindness:
according to the abundance of thy compassions, [g]blot out my revoltings.

[e] *cf.* Lk. 18. 13.
[f] Ps. 25. 6, 7. Ps. 88. 11.
[g] Is. 43. 25. Is. 44. 22. Acts 3. 19.

* *Eloah*, singular of *Elohim*, "God."

Christ, and has never known God,—cannot with all its searching find Him out; and yet "He is not far from every one of us."

So here: "These things thou diddest, and I kept silence: thou thoughtest Me just like thyself." But the limit of patience has been reached: "I will reprove thee, and set them in array before thine eyes."

5. The way and the end are clearly put before all in the closing verse. The simple leaving God out of account is fatal to the one who does this. Nothing beside this is necessary to secure the condemnation, which, if it be slow to come, is no less certain to arrive. On the other hand, the best life cannot avail without *salvation*. We are not to expect in the book of Psalms the full declaration of the gospel, as we know it; nor would this be just the place in which to find it. But the need of salvation by all, is emphasized, and it is made plain by the contrast with what has just preceded it, that this is no mere temporal deliverance. The close here is a finger pointing to the psalm that follows.

PSALM LI.

The fifty-first psalm is a spiritual enigma. Bishop Horsley, nearly a century ago, rightly discerned it to be "the penitential confession of the converted Jews." He adds: "The subject-matter of this psalm can have no reference to the Hebrew title prefixed thereto, because David, polluted with adultery and murder, could not say, 'Against Thee only have I sinned,' and because the prayer for the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem would have been an inappropriate petition in the days of David. The application of the psalm to restored, repentant Israel, is self-evident. I view this fifty-first psalm as a precomposed form of penitential prayer, afore designed and prepared by Infinite Wisdom for the use of penitent and believing Israel, in the perilous times of the last days."*

While we may safely accept this prophetical view, agreeing, as it does, with the whole character and scope of the book, and suiting perfectly the place in which we find it, the negative side as to the rejection of the Hebrew title is by no means so clear, and certainly perilous in the adoption of a principle which makes a difficulty of this kind a reason for correction of the text of Scripture. Others have, viewing the psalm as really a psalm of David, preferred to suppose the last two verses a "later, perhaps liturgical, addition."† But what is the value of such speculations as to unnamed authors? It will be said that there is not the same assuredness as to the *titles* of the psalms that there is as to the

* Quoted from Coleman's "Revision of the Book of Psalms," p. 130.
† See Moll, in Lange.

(ii.) and for separation from his sin.
(iii.) which he realizes.

Wash me thoroughly from my perversity,
and [h]cleanse me from my sin.
For I am conscious of my revoltings:
and my [i]sin is constantly before me.

[h] *cf.* Zech. 3. 3, 4 with 1 Jno. 1. 7.
[i] 2 Sam. 12. 13. *cf.* Dan. 9. 5, 6; *cf.* Gen. 42. 21.

psalms themselves, and that the Septuagint has many differences.* Yet we have found so far the Hebrew titles to recommend themselves by their general suitability, sometimes to have most unique significance, as in that to the twenty-second. Here it is true that there is difficulty in tracing the connection between David's sin with Bathsheba and the prophetic application to Israel in the latter days. Nor does it seem as if there were or could be typical meaning in this awful blot upon the history of the king. But there may be connection of another nature; and there seems no difficulty as to the details of the history, though here "blood-guiltiness" be the only specified sin. The fourth verse, which is objected, really makes none; and as to the closing prayer, can we undertake to say what shall be the limit of a prophet's vision in predicting the future?

The psalm is enigmatical in more ways than this; nay, it is full of deep meanings which are little more than hinted at. When we consider its latter-day application, this is not so strange. It is in the meanwhile a mystery for faith; but with Christ revealed to us, the key of all mysteries is in our hand.

The psalm is throughout a prayer,—the utterance of a human voice, as that of the last psalm is largely a divine. It answers the challenge there with the confession of sin; but the sin confessed here does not appear a direct answer to the charge before. There are, however, other links of connection between the two psalms: "The same depreciation of the external sacrifice," says Delitzsch, "that is expressed in Psalm l. finds utterance in Psalm li., which supplements the former, according as it extends the spiritualizing of the sacrifice to the offering for sin." But this spiritualizing needs careful consideration, and to be governed by the inspired canon of Psalm xl., 7, which we have already considered, "In the volume of the book it is written of Me." Nor can we admit Cheyne's assertion that the psalmist holds a different theory of sacrifice from the writer of Psalm l. In such ways as these, which quite take Scripture from us, how many are following each other, according to the moment's whim, to-day! But let us study the psalm.

1. The psalmist begins with the expression of deep conviction, which is not without the accompaniment of a faith that discerns in God Himself that which answers to the need of which the soul has been made conscious. He supplicates grace from Him with whom is the fountain of grace, abundance of compassions and loving-kindness: that He should act therefore in conformity with His own nature and blot out his revoltings. He calls these by a strong name, which stamps the outward acts with their true character as emanating from a spirit of rebellion,—not defective obedience, but revolt. He prays for complete removal of all this as defilement,—to be thoroughly washed from his perversity, and cleansed from his sin. He represents how conscious he is of it: his sin is always before his eyes. Experience of it has brought him where his rebellious spirit has been humbled to realize every word of God as righteous, and the spirit which would judge even man's almighty Maker is humbled and broken down before Him.

"Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned" is never true in an absolute way of any sin that man can commit. We are too closely united together in the world for this to be possible. If I have another god than Jehovah, does this hurt no one but myself? If I degrade Him by an idol, or take His Name in vain, is there no reflex influence of such acts upon others around me? Who that was truly convicted of sin could say this or believe it? and how above all the man who has need to plead for deliverance from the guilt of blood-shedding!

* Here, however, it agrees with the Hebrew.

(iv.) the test of experience.

Against [j] thee, thee only, have I sinned;
and done this evil in thy [k] sight,
that thou mayest be [l] justified when thou speakest,
and overcome when thou art judged.

2 (5-8): The salvation.
(i.) sin of origin.

Behold, in perversity was I [m] born:
and in sin did my [n] mother conceive me.

[j] *cf.* Gen. 39. 9. *cf.* Lev. 6. 2.
[k] *cf.* 2 Sam. 12. 12.
[l] Rom. 3. 4, 19.
[m] *cf.* Rom. 5. 12. *cf.* Eph. 2. 1-3.
[n] Job 14. 4; Job 15. 14; *ctr.* Lk. 1. 35.

On the other hand, as Delitzsch well says, "Every relation in which man stands to his fellow-men, and to created things in general, is but the manifest form of his fundamental relationship to God:" at every point at which we touch His creatures, we touch God Himself; every blow struck at them is struck at Him, just as obedience to Him necessitates harmonious relationship to all His creatures. The guilt of every sin is fundamentally the same, revolt against God: this is, in a true sense, the only sin.

2. In the next four verses, we find the extent and character of the salvation needed. Here the psalmist begins with the corruption of origin, as to which Job asks the solemn question, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" This is often pleaded as in large measure an excuse, as we well know; though an awakened conscience cannot satisfy itself with this. Here it comes in to show how great is the salvation needed. Just as in Romans the apostle begins with personal sins and judgment in view of these, not of the fall of Adam; but afterwards, where he enters upon the subject of the completeness of the remedy, then he begins with Adam and the corruption of our nature (chap. v. 12, *sq.*). So here we shall find it: "Behold," says David, "in perversity was I born,"—with a moral twist; "and in sin did my mother conceive me"—not inside Paradise, but outside. Thus sin is a leprosy, a communicable disease,—so to speak, in the blood; and needing a remedy of corresponding energy to meet it. God turns it to corresponding blessing. The "inward parts" are the reins, the kidneys,—hidden in the centre of the body and enveloped in fat,—the very type of excretory organs, for this is their whole function. In them we have going on continually the purification of the blood from what, if retained, would destroy life. Their special relation is to the processes of nutrition and disassimilation, and thus their work presents to us the plainest analogy to that work of moral discrimination and rejection of the evil which goes on under the oversight of the conscience in the quiet chambers of meditation within the inner man. There God desires "truth" or steadfast fidelity; and in the hidden part makes us to know "wisdom" (*chokhma*), the word used being one "applied to the discrimination of good and evil" (*Wilson*).

Thus we find how in God's sovereignty over all things, He turns this close and necessary acquaintance with evil in the innermost recesses of our being into an exercising of our spiritual senses to discern and separate it from that which is of God and good (Heb. v. 14). Would that we knew better this "exercise" which would make us adepts in this work of spiritual discrimination! Here the new nature begins to manifest itself in the quickening of the conscience as the heart is turned to God. Blessed sight, the tender sensitiveness of one new born, thus searched out and exercised, even though yet the gospel be not known so as to give rest before God! and that is the condition here.

But we come now to the gospel, although in that veiled way in which the Old Testament of necessity so largely spoke, and still, as all through this psalm, in the language of prayer for the blessing, not yet as realizing it. "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Here nothing is mentioned that had real power to cleanse, even in the Mosaic ritual! The hyssop was of course only that by which the sprinkling that really cleansed was effected. It was used to sprinkle the passover blood upon the doorposts (Exod. xii. 22). It was that which, along with cedar and scarlet, was dipped with the living bird in the blood of its fellow, which then was sprinkled

(ii.) turned to its contrary.

Behold, thou desirest [o] truth in the inward parts:
and in the hidden [parts] thou wilt make me to know [p] wisdom.

(iii.) cleansing of the leper.

Purge me with [q] hyssop, and I shall be clean:
wash me, and I shall be [r] whiter than snow.

o *ctr.* Mt. 23. 25.
p *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 22–24.
q *cf.* Nu. 19. 2–10, 17–19.
r Isa. 1. 18.

upon the leper, to cleanse him (Lev. xiv. 6, 7). It was used in the case of one defiled with the dead to sprinkle the water of purification upon him (Numb. xix. 18). There is no other use of hyssop given us in the Old Testament; and to one of these it must refer.

We can have little difficulty in deciding which is here to be understood. The passover is out of the question. Besides its relation to one special feast, which would hardly make it appropriate to an individual case like this, the blood of the paschal lamb was not sprinkled upon the person, but on the door-posts of the houses within which the feast was being kept. Of the two other occasions, the sprinkling upon the leper might seem to be most appropriate to the case of one so deeply affected with sin, and in a state so naturally incurable, as the fifth verse has shown. In the case of the leper, however, the hyssop has no distinct relation to the cleansing: it is simply dipped in the blood, along with the cedar and scarlet and the living bird, and then it is said only that "he"—the priest—"shall sprinkle." On the contrary, in the ordinance of the red heifer (Num. xix.) the hyssop comes again, as at the passover, into unmistakable prominence as the means of sprinkling the blood; while, in contrast with the passover, this *is* sprinkled upon the person, to cleanse him. Thus the reference in the psalm would naturally be to this. Thus defilement *with the dead* is expressly what is before us here; while the deliverance sought from blood-guiltiness (in the fourteenth verse) shows us how far beyond ordinary defilement the case here goes. The finger, as it were, points in a certain direction to show us what is in question, but there is still an enigma to be solved: how can the law of the red heifer apply? was it ever ordained for cleansing from the guilt of blood-shedding? The only answer that can be given is necessarily in the negative.

The truth is that the law necessarily fails to meet the case. No sacrifice was, or could be, ordained to put away the guilt of murder.* The soul was cast for this on the sovereign mercy of God alone. The types here, as just now said, might point in a certain direction, but that was all. The one supreme Sacrifice, to be offered by Him of whom it was all "written in the volume of the book," alone answers all questions, sets the conscience at rest, purging the soul "to serve the living and true God." Hence the failure of all typical sacrifices in such a case as this is full of instruction and blessing. The sinner here was brought face to face and left alone with God; the types as fingers pointing to that which would do what they could not do—expressly disclaiming virtue to be in them.

So the psalmist is beyond law here: it is from God and not from man must come the purging; and yet with a plain reference to the law also, which sends us to it for instruction. Thus viewed, the type of the red heifer, with its confessed incompetency to give us more than the shadow—"*not* the very image"—may yet help us to find "the very image."

In this way another apparent failure must be carefully considered. The ordinance of the red heifer was for the *restoration*, simply, of a defiled person. It does not in any way speak of the first bringing of a soul to God. But the case here, as we are viewing it, is that of souls brought for the first time to God; and these two things—the salvation of a sinner and the restoration of a saint—are, of course, very different things: how are we to reconcile this difference? or what are we to learn by it?

As reinforcing the reference to the type, the fact of the sin in question being *David's sin* is very significant and helpful. The very subject of the psalm then

* See the notes on the sin-offering, Lev. iv.

(iv.) the experience resulting.

3 (9-13): Internal cleansing for the sanctuary. (i.) beginning with righteousness.

Make me to hear [s]joy and gladness:
that the [t]bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

Hide thy [u]face from my sins:
and blot out all my perversities.

s ver. 12. Ps. 32. 11.
t Ps. 32. 3.
u *cf.* Num. 23. 21. *ctr.* 2 Cor. 3. 18.

is, after all, the failure and restoration of a saint: for, spite of the enormity of his offence, no one would doubt David to have been this. The type referred to becomes therefore really in harmony with the theme of the psalm.

But does it not lead us away from the application we have made of it? If it apply to Israel in the last days and their confession of the awful murder of the Son of God sent to them, is not this the time of their conversion to God and being brought into a new place of blessing, and *not* their restoration as saints to a state of blessing enjoyed before? How can "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation" be a suited prayer in *their* mouth?

Consider it again, and this inconsistency will disappear. For, while *of that generation* it will undoubtedly be true that they will be then for the first time brought to God,—theirs will be in every respect just the salvation of sinners,—yet, if we remember that this is *Israel* seeking the Lord, we shall realize that, as to the *nation*, it is in fact a case of *restoration*. Thus the two things are not in this case contradictory to one another. As *Israel's* sin, the rejection of their Messiah looks back to their national history.

Another harmony develops from this view of the type. The ordinance of the red heifer provided for the cleansing of one defiled with the dead, *not a new offering*, not the shedding of blood afresh, but recurrence to an offering before offered;—as far as we have any knowledge, *once for all offered*. How striking a correspondence is here between the type in question and Israel in the end of her long wilderness journey, cleansed by an offering long before offered! in fact, by that very death on its divine side, of which on its human side they were the responsible and guilty instruments! Thus we find in this application of the water of purification the same recognition of a lapse of time between the offering and its effect in cleansing as we find in the type of the day of atonement and its ordinance of the two goats (Lev. xvi., notes).

It is surely the voice of Israel, then, that is heard in the cry, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean." The hyssop itself may speak of Christ as man in the lowest place. It is used thus in contrast with the cedar (1 Kings iv. 33) as the type of littleness,—"the hyssop that groweth out of the wall,"—while, as with the shittah-tree (or acacia), it grows in the wilderness, as a "root out of a dry ground,"—growing indeed in the clefts of the rock and the driest of places. If it be a caper, as Royle and Tristram agree, then, like the shittim-wood, it has the thorns of the curse upon it. Contrariwise, its name is perhaps derived from a word which means "to shine." One would expect that the hyssop in this connection should give us some memorials of the Lord: "purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean." Then how blessed to be said by a poor sinner; and yet it is only confidence in God's work being, as it must be, well done: "wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

Gospel this is, and he realizes it as such: "make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice." It is only prayer as yet however, but a divinely taught prayer surely. We too, if the gospel be "good news," ought to have the joy of the gospel; and healthful, medicinal it is, even for crushed bones. "The joy of the Lord is your strength."

But we pass on to look more deeply at this inner work.

3. The third section, as we have learned to expect, leads us into the sanctuary, and naturally with this speaks of the sanctification needed for the presence of God. But in the first verse we are reminded that this roots itself in, and builds itself up by, the knowledge of complete acceptance. "Hide Thy face from my

(ii.) steadfast separation from sin.
(iii.) the presence of God and His Spirit.
(iv.) a suited experience.

[v] Create in me a clean heart, O God:
and renew a [w] steadfast spirit within me.
[x] Cast me not away from thy presence:
and [y] take not thy holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the [z] joy of thy salvation:
and let a willing spirit sustain me.

v cf. 2 Cor. 5. 17. *cf.* Gal. 6. 15. *cf.* Eph. 2. 10.
w Ps. 86. 11.
x cf. Esth. 4. 15–17.
Esth. 5. 1, 2. *ctr.* Heb.

10. 14, 19. *y ctr.* Eph. 1. 13; *ctr.* Eph. 4. 30. *z cf.* Mt. 26. 75 with Jno. 21. 15–17; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 8.

sins," he says, "and blot out all my perversities." He must have no cloud upon that glorious Face, into which he contemplates looking. For this is the life of holiness itself, the manifestation of God to the soul, the entrancing joy of which the apostle spoke: "whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God" (2 Cor. v. 13). But this would be impossible if in that holy Presence a single stain of sin were discoverable. Here this thought is expressed only negatively and as prayer: but he knows well no spot must be found. The Christian finds it realized in positive "acceptance in the Beloved," all the value of Christ being accounted to him. Not even the thought of a "Face hidden" is worthy of this. The Face beams with radiant appreciation of Him in whom we are represented, and find unchanging, unchangeable perfection. No cloud can come over this sky, save as unbelief darkens it. The veil being rent that so long prevented it, now, says the apostle, "let us draw nigh."

"Let us draw nigh"! what, need of exhortation? Here is One to know whom is to have all things,—to be without whom is the "outer darkness" of hell! God, Creator, Preserver, Redeemer of men,—Light, Life, Love,—revealed in Christ, His love-gift to us,—opens to us the Sanctuary of His Presence. It is not merely possible to draw nigh, there where Moses could not, and seraphs veil their faces; but God has brought us in,—giving us an abiding-place in the Holiest of all; free right of citizenship in the New Jerusalem of God. Here it is lawful to covet and possess, as far as faith can penetrate,—God's word being the inventory of all that which He has given us richly to enjoy; His Spirit in us "searching the deep things of God:" so that what "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered (naturally) into the heart of man," He "hath revealed unto us by His Spirit," "that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." (1 Cor. ii.) After all this, do we need exhortation to possess ourselves of it, or to draw near to Him who had drawn near to us?

What hinders us? What hinders any one of us? Nothing, let us speak it plainly, but lack of heart, and unbelief that goes with this,—goes before it, and springs from it as well. "The vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver unto one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee, and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed; and the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee; and *he* saith, I am not learned." (Isa. xxix. 11, 12.)

But we have got beyond our psalm. The psalmist realizes at least, as has been said, that God's face—God Himself—is his one necessity; and that one sin discerned by the holy Eye would be impossible for Him to go on with. Does he not realize something of what the ashes of the sin-offering mean, by which just now he has been in reality asking to be purged? We, at least, know this well. But along with the need of sacrifice, there is need of an initial work also, which none but God can effect,—which needs nothing less than the power of the Creator: "*Create* in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a steadfast spirit within me." And we have learned that we are "*created* in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before prepared, that we should walk in them" (Eph. ii. 10). He does not speak formally of the new birth, nor was this clearly known until New Testament times; but he despairs of any effectual change by any effort of his own; he, like the apostle, with a groan of anguish turns from an impractical "body of death," to find a Deliverer outside himself altogether. To possess a "clean heart," for such as he has discovered himself to be, God must "create a creation," and for the psalmist as for us, the light of heaven must be

(v.) the end.

I will [a]teach revolters thy ways:
and sinners shall return unto thee.

4 (14–17): The failure of sacrifice.

Deliver me from [b]blood-guiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation:

(i.) righteousness in grace.

[and] my tongue shall [c]sing of thy righteousness.

a *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 12–16. *cf.* Ps. 126. 1–3.

b *cf.* Mt. 27 25. *cf.* Acts 5. 28. *cj.* Zech. 12. 10;

c *cf.* Isa. 53. 4–6 with Isa. 54. 1.

made to break out in self-revealing, God-revealing power, over the yeasty confusion of the barren and restless deep. O blessed and beauteous Light of heaven, though Thou showest us but the fury of the untamed swell of passion and unrest! Even so communion has begun, if fitfully, with God. The soul begins to side with Him, even against itself; and there, I suppose, a "clean heart" has begun. But a "steadfast [or fixed] spirit" goes beyond this, just in the removal of that fitfulness: the heart being at rest for communion as the calm lake mirrors heaven. But we miss here the Christian *how* of this: the need is felt, but the manner of accomplishment is not known.

The next verse shows the believer, while it shows also the conflict with doubt. He prays not to be cast away from the divine presence. He has known it, but knows not the conditions of its permanence. Many Christians do not know them to-day. So, too, he prays, "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me"; and many would be in agony over this. There is no need to think of anything special to the king of Israel. To the whole work of God in the soul the Holy Spirit was always necessary, in every saint of every time. The Spirit of God as indwelling in the Christian, the Spirit of adoption by which we cry, Abba, Father, and the *baptism* of the Spirit by which the body of Christ is formed,—*these* are distinctive blessings of the dispensation to which we belong (John xiv. 16, 17; Gal. iv. 1–6; Acts i. 5; 1 Cor. xii. 13). The Spirit of God Himself could teach David such a prayer as this: for us it would be unbelief to utter it; for by the Spirit we are sealed unto the day of redemption (Eph. iv. 30).

But how do we value blessings so inestimable as these? The breathing after God Himself, so characteristic as it is of the Book of Psalms, may well put to shame the coldness of our hearts in view of it. Where are the souls that pant and long after the presence of God as do these men of another and darker time? We may not use some of their prayers, and can thank God we do not: yes, but do we breathe their longings? Or shall we give men to think that the increase of knowledge and the apprehension of grace chill the heart, and that the more abundantly God has shown us love, the less He is to be loved?

Again the psalmist cries:—

"Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and let a willing spirit sustain me." For heaviness of heart enfeebles both walk and work: the joy of the Lord gives strength and courage. We may not make light of emotion. Our care is to be that it be justified with knowledge and connected with practical result. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace" (Gal. v. 22); but then "long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance," follow after these and sustain them.

So too the practical result is promised here: "I will teach revolters Thy ways, and sinners shall return unto Thee." Israel in fact will lead the nations in obedience. Israel shall become Jezreel, "the seed of God." "And I will sow her to Me in the earth," says the Lord God (Hos. ii. 23).

4. The theme of the second part of the previous psalm now comes up again, but from another side. The failure of the sacrifices is now proclaimed by the lips of man, the sinner who has found them fail in his own need, and realizes the divine meaning of this failure. The psalmist returns to the thought of his own sin, which he now names distinctly, and from the guilt of which God alone can be the deliverer. As the God of his salvation, his tongue shall sing of His righteousness. This seems too evangelic, if we take it in the Pauline sense of God's righteousness revealed in the gospel, a note of which, however, we have

(ii.) testimony.

(iii.) the heart of God.

(iv.) the failed creature in his place as such.

Lord, [d]open thou my lips,
and my mouth shall declare thy praise.
For thou desirest not [e]sacrifice, or I would give it:
thou delightest not in [f]burnt-offering.
The sacrifices of God are a [g]broken spirit:
a broken and crushed heart, O God, thou wilt [h]not despise.

d Isa. 32. 4. Isa. 35. 6.
e Ps. 50. 8. Ps. 40. 6-8.
f *cf.* Lev. 1. 3-17. *ctr.* Eph. 5. 2.
g Ps. 34. 18. Hos. 6. 6. Isa. 57. 15.
h *cf.* Lk. 18. 9-14.

heard in the twenty-second psalm. But to measure the depth of an inspired statement by the intelligence (real or supposed) of the writer, would be a folly that would really leave God out of His Word, and make the meaning of it often an impractical attainment for us. He has in the beginning of the psalm been pleading for mercy according to the known compassion of God, that is, in consistency with His own character. This then is already the "righteousness," of which when delivered he will sing; and thus the righteousness spoken of is as the God of his salvation. The cross is the full explanation of this, and that, as we have seen, is in the psalm also, though veiled under the type referred to in it. He then speaks again of the testimony which in fact restored Israel will render to His praise, when their dumb lips shall be opened.

Now comes the disclaiming of legal sacrifices. "For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: Thou delightest not in burnt-offering." In fact, as has been already said, none could be prescribed for sin like this, a thing which limits very much therefore the absoluteness of this disclaimer. Here the "sacrifices of God" could only be "a broken spirit!" Not as if this were the true antitype of the legal offerings, a supposition of which there has been given explicit denial in the words of Christ Himself by His Spirit in the fortieth psalm: "In the volume of the book it is written of ME." Nor can a broken spirit be the justification of God's grace in salvation, though it may define the condition morally necessary to the sinner's acceptance. And this is the only possible thought here. That would not be a broken spirit which could estimate itself as having atoning value in the sight of God. It is the very confession of sin and worthlessness which makes it possible for Him to come in in mercy; and in *this* way indeed to come to God may have attaching to it all the certainty which the bringing of sacrifice ensured in those cases in which they were prescribed. In this comparison with the legal sacrifices, the failed creature taking his place must necessarily, with God, far outweigh the ritual service, and in fact permit God to come in in his behalf. He will act according to His heart, and we can trust His heart. The case is in His hand; and divine wisdom will be able to conserve divine righteousness in meeting so desperate a condition. Christ is the answer of wisdom as to this: and now it can indeed be said: "a broken and *crushed* heart"—so it literally reads—"O God, Thou wilt not despise."

5. In the last section, it is openly Zion's cause that is pleaded: the place in which sovereign grace will act toward Israel, and therefore the place of God's eternal rest. "Do good in Thy good pleasure unto Zion: Thou shalt build the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt Thou be pleased with sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt-offerings and whole burnt-offerings: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar."

The cessation of animal sacrifices is not implied then in what has gone before; and according to Ezekiel they will be offered even in millennial days. (chap. xliii. 18–28, xlv. 15–25.) If this is not according to our thoughts, we must always be ready to correct our thoughts by Scripture. The millennial has not the perfection of the eternal condition; and the senses will be again appealed to in a way that does not accord with the present dispensation of faith. Of this there are many examples; and there is no surer way of getting into confusion in our thoughts than by judging of what is suited to one dispensation by the analogies of another. The numerical structure seems here indeed to emphasize the *confirmation* of sacrifice, as before it did its failure; and both things are suited,

5 (18,19): Israel with God.
(i.) His pleasure in Zion.
(ii.) confirmation of sacrifice.

Do good in thy good pleasure unto [t]Zion:
thou shalt build the [j]walls of Jerusalem.
Then shalt thou be pleased with [k]sacrifices of righteousness,
[l]burnt-offering, and whole burnt-offering:
then shall they offer up bullocks upon thine altar.

t cf. Ps. 50.2. *cf.* Ps. 102. 13, 14. *cf.* Ps. 122. 6, 7.
j Isa. 60. 10, 18. Isa. 26. 1.
k Ps. 27. 6. Mal. 3. 3.
l Ezek. 43. 18-27; Ezek. 46. 12-15; Isa. 60. 7; *cf.* 2 Chr. 7. 4-7.

each in its place. Their retention and revival are, no doubt, God's witness to the world of His way of acceptance and blessing ever, at which unbelief has so largely scoffed. As the carcases of the enemies (Isa. lxvi.) in their doom before men's eyes will be the open testimony to the judgment of hell for the ungodly, —of that Gehenna of which it has already furnished the illustrative images,— and as the city of God will be the perpetual witness of the joys of the blessed, — so it will be good in the Lord's sight to have this commemorative witness of the way by which the joy of His favor can be realized or attained.

Thus these sacrifices will be now "sacrifices of *righteousness*," because offered with a true heart and with hands "washed in innocency," as David has elsewhere expressed it (Ps. xxvi. 6). And the whole tenor of these closing verses confirms the prophetic character of the psalm as the national confession which will be the necessary pre-requisite for national blessing. This also makes clear the connection with the previous psalm, which is certainly a divine challenge of the nation and of the thought that sacrifices without righteousness could be acceptable to God. The two psalms together give us the double controversy between Israel and the Lord, of which the second part of Isaiah (the second Isaiah of the rationalizing critics) treats at large—the controversy as to the law and as to Christ; of the Old Testament and of the New. One might imagine, from the way that these are presented here, that they would be questions which would be raised with restored Israel in this same order, and that here they have been in the presence of the true Joseph, who has manifested Himself to His brethren; but it may be also that the order is only grounded on the history, and not itself to be thus fulfilled in the history of the future.

SUBD. 2.

The second subdivision of the second book, like that of the first, speaks at length of Antichrist, as its numerical place might lead us to expect it would; but it goes on, according to the character of the book as a whole, to speak more largely of the deliverance, its grounds and features. There are but two sections, nine psalms altogether; the book hastening on to the manifestation of Christ Himself, which we find, not here, but in the third subdivision.

David is the only writer named as the composer of these psalms; but the titles are again found accurately to divide the two sections from each other; the first four being *Maskil* psalms, or psalms of instruction, and the five following *Michtams*: each of these titles being in perfect relation to the contents of the series so designated.

Sec. 1.

The first section, then, is composed of these *Maskil* psalms, the character of which we have already considered (see Ps. xxxii. *notes*). With one exception (Ps. liv.) they all convey instruction as to the Lawless One, the rebel king and false Messiah in Israel in the last days,—the very subject which the "mind that has wisdom," the *maskil* among men, is called to consider in Rev. xiii. 18. "The identification of the Lawless One" is therefore the general theme of this first section.

PSALM LII.

The fifty-second psalm first of all depicts him in this independent character. He is the mighty one who maketh not God his strength"; the deceiver also, according to the description of the apostles Paul and John. The latter marks

SUBDIVISION 2. (Ps. lii.-lx.)

Steps on to Deliverance.

SECTION 1. (Ps. lii.-lv.)

The identification of the man of sin.

Ps. lii.

[1]PSALM LII.

The strong man who made not God his strength.

To the chief musician: Maskil of David; when [m]Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him, David came to the house of Animelech.

1 (1-7): The lawless. (i.) the mighty. (ii.) his words. (iii.) his heart.

WHY [n]boastest thou in evil, O [o]mighty man?
the [p]mercy of the Mighty God [endureth] daily.
Yawning depths thy [q]tongue deviseth:
[it is] like a sharpened razor, O worker of [r]deceit!
Thou hast [s]loved evil rather than good:
lying instead of speaking right. Selah.

m 1 Sam. 21. 7. 1 Sam. 22. 9, 17-22.
n Ps. 10. 2,3.
o ver. 7. Ps. 33. 16.
p Ps. 6, 4. Ps. 13. 5.
q Ps. 10. 7-10. Ps. 55. 11.
r Ps. 38. 12. Mi. 6. 12.
s ctr. Ps. 45. 7. Ps. 4. 2.

him out as "the liar," who denies the Father and the Son (1 Jno. ii. 22); the former (2 Thess. ii. 9–11) speaks of his "coming as after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders (power and signs and wonders, of falsehood) and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness." It is natural therefore that this should be what is set before us in this first "maskil."

The reference to the history of David is, like that in the title of the last psalm, difficult to understand. We have no cause to reject it on that account, confirmed as it is again by the Septuagint. Doeg the Edomite is doubtless but a feeble representative of the great enemy of God and man at the time of the end; and yet there are evident features of resemblance. The "Edomite" in itself implies the enmity, so unnatural as it is, which derives its bitterness from the rupture of natural relations, and this may easily represent that of outward relations which have professedly a more spiritual character, as that of Judas to the Lord. This is brought out in its application to the great final enemy in the fourth psalm of this series (lv.). Then the herdsman of Saul may seem very little the mighty man of the present psalm; but through his words (which is what is dwelt upon) he was in fact mighty enough to cause a wholesale slaughter of the priestly family. And it is by his words that, as already said, Antichrist will prevail, whatever "power" may accompany his words. The allusion to the "tent" may also borrow significance from the history, as we shall see.

1. The psalm is divided into two parts, which are in contrast with one another, the first seven verses being faith's challenge of this mighty one, as the last two verses give us the man of faith himself and his portion from God. The "mighty man" who uses the little might he has in bitter persecution of the saints is here put in contrast also with El, the "Mighty" God, whose attribute is mercy—mercy enduring daily. How blessed is this gentle goodness of Almighty power. And it is not contradicted either by the presence of this wicked one himself: for even such an one "the goodness of God" would "lead to repentance." The awful end of unrepented evil makes this slowness of dealing with the evil man unspeakably solemn; while he may use it for "storing up wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." Meanwhile faith knows that this power of God, with all its apparent slowness, has things completely under its control: so that "He maketh the wrath of man to praise Him; and the remainder of wrath He will restrain." Nothing escapes from this all-seeing, perfect control, which maketh all things work together for good, to them that love Him.

And yet it is "man's day" in which we are; and man avails himself of it. His tongue is indeed his mightiest member, and by his words he may well be justified or condemned. Alas, his tongue, as James declares, is "a world of

(iv.) his weakness.
Thou lovest all [t]devouring words:
tongue of deceit.
(v.) his end.
The [u]Mighty One shall likewise smite thee down for ever:
he shall seize thee, and pluck thee out of the tent,
and [v]root thee out of the land of the living. Selah.
(vi.) the victory.
The righteous also shall see it, and [w]fear;
and shall [x]laugh at him.
(vii.) the summing up.
Behold the [y]strong man that made not God his strength,
but [z]trusted in the abundance of his riches,
[and] strengthened [a]himself in his deep practice.

t Prov. 19. 28.
u Ps. 50. 1. *cf.* ver. 1. *cf.* Ps. 2. 4, 5.
v *cf.* 2 Thes. 2. 8. *cf.* Rev. 19. 20.
w *cf.* Ps. 40. 3. *cf.* Ps. 64. 9.
x Ps. 58. 10. *cf.* Is. 66. 24.
y Ps. 33. 16. Ps. 44. 6. *cfr.* 2 Cor. 12. 8–10.
z Ps. 49. 6. Ps. 62. 10.
a *cf.* Job. 15. 25; *cf.* Ezek. 7. 13.

iniquity"; "yawning depths" of it, as it is put here, "his tongue deviseth": in which, how easily, the unwary may be engulfed. Changing the figure, though the implications are no less murderous, this tongue of the wicked is "like a sharp razor,"—cutting before one is aware. And out of the heart the mouth speaketh: "thou hast *loved* evil rather than good; lying instead of speaking right." How the great enemy of man is discerned in all this! for "he is a liar, and the father of it." Truth will not serve his purpose: that is, the whole, full truth; he is fond of using it, so far as it will give color and attractiveness to his lie,—a film of varnish over a rotten interior,—or like an ice-film of purity over his cavernous iniquity,—itself but a deception, a lure, a deeper lie.

Yet this deceit is itself the confession of weakness: power that is equal to its end has at least no need of it. And this confession that is in it makes it thus far unpalatable to the pride of strength. In its love to devour, the tongue may become a "tongue of deceit"; but this humiliation it does *not* love. Thus it carries with it the witness of its own frailty and mutability: the seed of mortality is in it, the witness of the judgment of God upon it; and so it is foreseen. "The Mighty One shall likewise smite thee down forever: he shall seize, and pluck thee out of the tent, and root thee out of the land of the living."

There is an expression here, which we must consider in the light of the application of the psalm to the Wicked one of the last days. Moll unites with Delitzsch in interpreting the "tent" out of which the mighty one is to be plucked, as the dwelling-place of Doeg, with an allusion to his herdsman's tent. A much older application is that by Kimchi, adopted by Grier and others, to the holy tent or tabernacle at which Ahimelech ministered, and where we find in the history that Doeg was "detained before Jehovah." Delitzsch says, if this were meant, it would have been "*His* tent"; but how can we be sure always of just the language which an inspired writer might see fit to use? Nay, one may see reasons for the less distinct expression even in the history itself, and far more in the prophetic reference. Thus, if the shew-bread were but common bread while David was in rejection (see notes on 1 Sam. xxi.) why should not the very house of God itself be less distinctly owned as that on the same account? And if we think of Antichrist's connection with it in the future time, how much more appropriate still would this disclaimer of its being God's house, when invaded by idolatry—the abomination that maketh desolate,—be perfectly in place?

One cannot but regard, then, the words here as a fresh indication of what is before us in the psalm. If Doeg alone were contemplated indeed, the application might seem as strained; as it is generally perhaps considered. But we can see how the Spirit of God, in contemplation of the future, might seize upon such a connection and use it to suggest that all important one in the history of the Wicked one which could hardly be omitted in such a sketch as the present, and which yet, in the history of David at least, would seem to find elsewhere nothing to suggest it.

Now comes the triumph of the righteous: "the righteous also shall see it and

2 (8, 9): The believer in contrast.
(i.) planted.
(ii.) confirmation of faith.

But I am like a [b]green olive in the house of God:
I [c]trust in the mercy of God for ever and aye.
I will [d]praise thee for ever because thou hast done [this]:
and will wait on thy [e]Name; for it is good before thy saints.

Ps. liii.

[2]PSALM LIII.

The progress of evil and the throwing off of God.

To the chief musician, upon Mahalath: Maskil of David.

(i.) the multitude one.

THE [f]fool hath said in his [g]heart, There is [h]no God.
They have [i]corrupted themselves, and have done [j]abominable iniquity:
there is [k]none that doeth good.

b Ps. 92. 12, 13. Jer. 11. 16. Hos. 14. 5-8.
c Ps. 25. 2.
d Ps. 50. 23. Ps. 51. 15.
e Ps. 54. 6. Ps. 61. 8.
f Ps. 14. 1, etc. *cf.* Jer. 17. 11.
cf. Lk. 12. 20.
g Ps. 49. 11. *cf.* Deu. 29. 19.
h *cf.* Ps. 10. 4. Ex. 5. 2.
i Deu. 32. 5. *cf.* Ezek. 28. 17.
j Job 15. 16; Rev. 21. 8.
k Rom. 3. 10-12, 23.

fear, and shall laugh at him. Behold the strong man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his deep practice." The last word in the Hebrew here is the singular of the first word in the second verse, and there translated "yawning depths." The correspondence would seem to show correspondence of thought, although in the first case it is his words, in the latter his practice that is refered to.

Thus we have his case summed up. It is but that of fallen man "writ large;" "being in honor, he abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish." Putting away God from him, he puts away his link with life and blessedness; he is not a beast, nor does he come to an end as the beast does. Self-condemned, for him perdition is an evil which to the beast it is not, and which links itself with the eternity of his spirit-nature.

2. The believing remnant are now seen in contrast with this passing of mere human strength: "But I am like a green olive in the house of God,"—the tree in which abides that which typifies the Spirit of God, green in its freshness of life eternal, and in the house of God, which gives another help to understanding that "tent" out of which the wicked one is cast. Here it is openly named, and suitably to the permanence of all the blessing, a "house," not a "tent." Faith enters it with sure confidence: "I trust in the mercy of God forever and aye." Their praise too abides; and God is known by His glorious Name. Upon this for all developments of the future, he can wait and fear not: it is a Name that is good before the worshiping saints.

Psalm LIII.

The fifty-third psalm shows us the growth of the evil, both in breadth and intensity. God is here altogether thrown off, and the wicked one gathers after him a multitude of followers.

The title is a peculiar and significant one: "It is prefixed to two psalms, the fifty-third and the eighty-eighth: 'To the chief musician upon *Mahalath*.' Some Hebraists have supposed it to intend that the psalm was to be accompanied by an ancient musical instrument which bore such a name; or that, being derived from 'Machol,' it denoted a choral song to be sung in the Levitical service. But this last interpretation would be very unsuitable to the psalms in the inscriptions of which the word occurs. Since psalm eighty-eight is the gloomiest of all the psalms, and psalm fifty-three, although having a bright border, is still also a dark picture, the signification of *Mahalath*,—'sickness, sorrow,'—which is capable of being supported by Exod. xv. 26, must be retained. 'Upon Mahalath' signifies after a sad tone or manner, whether it be that *Mahalath* itself is a name for such an elegiac kind of melody, or that it was thereby designed to indicate the initial word of some popular song. So that we may regard

(ii.) God the witness.

God [l]looked down from heaven on the children of men,
to see if any one [m]understood [or] [n]sought after God.

(iii.) the result.

Every one of them is [o]turned back:
they have together become corrupt:
none doeth good, no, [p]not one.

(iv.) the folly of the workers of vanity.

Have the workers of vanity no knowledge?
[q]eating up my people, as if they ate bread!
they have not [r]called upon God.

l Gen. 6. 5,6. Ps. 33. 13. Prov. 15. 3.
m *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 19-21.
n *cf.* Prov. 2. 4, 5. *cf.* Isa. 55. 6.
o *cf.* Ex. 32. 8. *cf.* Jer. 2. 13.
p *cf.* Is. 6. 5. *cf.* Phil. 3. 4-7.
q Ps. 27. 2. Prov. 30. 14; Am. 8. 4; Mi. 3. 3.
r *cf.* Gen. 4. 26; Ps. 79. 6; Isa. 64. 7.

Mahalath as equivalent to *mesto*, and *piano*, or *andante*."* The best reason for this strangely sad title is found, indeed, in its mystical fitness to the psalms of which it is the inspired prefix.

"It is to be interpreted, therefore, 'upon Sickness,' a title of direction that the words should be accompanied by some soft, sad, melancholy flow of sound, in accord with their deeply sorrowful tone."†

The fifty-third psalm is, for the most part, a repetition of the fourteenth; and as such has provoked various criticism. In both psalms the divine Name is found seven times; but in the former one four times it is Jehovah, while in the present *Elohim* (God) is used in every case. This is, of course, in keeping with the general character of the second book. In either case the sevenfold affirmation of God in the presence of the multitude of the ungodly who deny Him, surely has significance.

(i.) As in the fourteenth psalm, the general mass of men, and not merely Israelites, are seen to be deniers of God. As to Antichrist, the man of sin, it is said of him that "he opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped." (2 Thess. ii. 4.) And of the lawless one in Daniel, that "he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, . . . neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, . . . nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all" (xi. 36, 37). John also declares that he shall deny "the Father and the Son." This does not prevent him honoring, instead of the true God, "the God of forces" (Dan. xi. 38); even as the second "beast" of Rev. xiii. (who is the same person) causes men to worship the first beast (the head of the revived Roman empire) and his image in the temple. This last—idolatry set up in the temple—is the fullest challenge to Him whose throne is there.

Thus he does not abandon all worship of God openly, but uses it for his purpose, and is, of course, atheist in heart. The mass who follow him have the same character. Even the Comtist has his worship of the *Grand Etre;* but he knows perfectly well that this "Great Being" of Humanity is only a play of imagination,—a concession to the emotional side of his nature, and no real god. So also may the followers of the "beast" have their political god and yet be godless. Their works show what they are at heart, and that to dethrone God there is much easier than to make another.

(ii.) All the time while they regard not God, He is regarding them. Patiently He searches among them so as to know if there be one that understands or seeks after Him. This anthropomorphism as to God is beautiful. Put it how you will, you must not believe that the living God is careless of His creatures. He will not judge hastily, or in a lump, but with careful discrimination.

(iii.) But there is not one that can be found: they have turned aside, all of them; they have together become corrupt; none doeth good, no, not one. These statements the apostle applies, as (apart from the grace of God) they must be applied, to the whole human race. That does not show that the design here is not more limited than this. The psalm as a whole,—each psalm as a whole—

* Delitzsch on the Psalms.
† "Christ the Key of the Psalter." By an Oxford Graduate.

(v.) the judgment of God.

There were they in great [s]fear, [where] no fear was:
for God hath [t]scattered the bones of him that [u]camped against thee:
thou hast put [them] to [v]shame, because God hath despised them.

(vi.) the victory.

Oh that Israel's [w]salvation were come out of Zion!
when God bringeth back the [x]captivity of his people,
[y]Jacob shall exult, Israel shall be glad.

Ps. liv.

[3]PSALM LIV.

God realized as manifesting Himself according to His Name.

To the chief musician, on stringed instruments; Maskil of David: when the [z]Ziphites came and said to Saul, Doth not David hide himself with us?

1 (1-3): The power of God invoked.

(i.) according to righteousness.

(ii.) hear my testimony.

[a]SAVE me, O God, by thy [b]Name,
and right me with thy [c]might.
O God, [d]hear my prayer!
give ear unto the sayings of my mouth.

1-25. *a* Ps. 7. 1, 10; Ps. 71. 2, 3. *b cf.* Ps. 20. 1; Ps. 79. 9; Prov. 18. 10. *c cf.* Ps. 20. 6; Ps. 80. 2; *cf.* Is. 63. 15. *d* Ps. 4. 1.

s Lev. 26.17, 36. Prov. 28. 1.
t Ps. 59. 11. Ps. 68. 30. Ezek. 6. 5 with 2 Ki. 23. 16.
u Ps. 27. 3.
v Ps. 44. 7. Ps. 71. 24.
w cf. Gen. 49. 18. Ps. 98. 2, 3. Is. 46. 13 with Is. 62. 11.
x Ps. 85. 1. Jer. 30. 3, 18. Jer. 31. 23. Ezek. 39. 25. Am. 9. 14, 15.
y cf. Is. 41. 14. Ps. 126.
z 1 Sam. 23. 19-26. 1 Sam. 26;

has plainly indeed such a limited application; but "as in water, face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man;" and this abundantly justifies the apostle's "no difference" doctrine. The place of the psalm in this series it is that shows the prophetic application.

(iv.) The next verse accordingly speaks of those whom God calls His people, and who are not to be confounded with these. They are being eaten up like bread by these scornful men here depicted. Yet are these workers of vanity merely,—without knowledge, not knowing even the feebleness, which would have brought them to call upon God.

(v.) But the panic of their doom at last and as in a moment falls upon them; and here the present psalm turns away from the fourteenth, which speaks of the general principle, to announce, as if it were accomplished, the doom of those encamped against Jerusalem. "God hath scattered the bones of those that encamped against thee." The feeble remnant also become the executors of divine judgment: "thou hast put them to shame, because God hath despised them."

(vi.) The psalm ends, as the fourteenth does, with the expression of longing desire that the salvation of Israel had indeed come; and that what faith foresees and declares were already a fact in experience.

Psalm LIV.

The third psalm of this Maskil series seems to turn aside from the direct subject of them, to show the encouragement given to faith under the trial, in the anticipation of the intervention of God in behalf of His people, suffering under the cruel hands of their persecutors. It is a psalm of the simplest character; for God does not hide His consolation deep in dark speeches from those who have need of it. The Name of God, that is, His revelation of Himself, is that which secures salvation for them. God acts so as to glorify Himself, by the display of His character; and in His salvation all His nature is declared: only the salvation here is an external one, from enemies; though it be true that for Him thus to come in for them their sins must be put away. But this is not before us here.

The occasion of the psalm is difficult in application to the last day trials; which only means that we have little skill in such applications. We know just enough to make us realize our shame that we know no more.

(iii.) the state of things.

For [e]strangers are risen against me,
and the violent [f]seek my life:
they have [g]not set God before them. Selah.

2 (4-7): The help.
(i.) in God Himself.
(ii.) against the enemies.
(iii.) the sacrifice of praise.
(iv.) the experience.

Behold, God is my [h]helper:
the Lord it is that [i]upholdeth my cause.
He shall [j]requite evil to those that watch me:
in faithfulness [k]destroy thou them!
I will freely [l]sacrifice to thee:
I will [m]praise thy Name, Jehovah; for it is good.
For out of all strait he hath [n]delivered me:
and mine eye hath [o]seen [its fill] upon mine enemies.

e Is. 1. 7. *cf.* Is.25.2–5.
f Ps. 38. 12. Ps. 86. 14.
g ctr. Ps. 16. 8.
h Ps. 10. 14. Ps. 30. 10.
i cf. Ps. 118. 6, 7.
j Ps. 94. 2. *cf.* Obad.15.
k Ps. 94. 23. Mi. 5. 9.
l cf. Ps. 51. 19, etc.
m Ps. 135. 1.
n Ps. 44. 4.
o Ps. 59. 10. Ps. 112. 8.

1. Short as it is, the psalm is divided into two parts; the first of which gives us the cry to God, the invocation of His power in behalf of the sufferer. Deliverance for him will be according to righteousness, that is, in consistency with God Himself; which implies no legal righteousness on the psalmist's part. God's righteousness we have learned to recognize in a gospel to sinners: and this is what the work of Christ has accomplished for us. The Name of God has only been revealed in Him: and when we know it, we have fuller ground of confidence than any righteousness possible to man could give. Here also, as regards the enemy, there is right that can be pleaded against him; and so the psalmist can say, "Right me with Thy might." His enemies are also God's enemies,—"strangers" in heart, though (as in David's case) they may be Israelites in the flesh; and violent men, who have not set God before them.

2. The second part anticipates in faith the help that has been sought. God Himself is the Helper: the Lord it is who upholds his soul. The result is then foreseen; simple enough from such premises: "He shall requite evil to them that watch me" with malignant eyes; "in Thy faithfulness," he can ask, "destroy Thou them." The time prophesied of for the earth's judgment is at hand, and God's faithfulness is pledged to fulfill His word.

Then indeed will delivered Israel with a full heart bring her sacrifices to God, and praise Jehovah's Name, once more and now fully made known in their redemption (see Exod. iii. 13–17, *notes*). The last verse gives the experience of this: "He *hath* delivered me out of all strait; and mine eye hath seen its fill upon mine enemies."

Psalm LV.

With the fifty-fifth psalm we reach the close of this Maskil series, and find the last word as to the wicked one. He has been seen in a certain relation to the dwelling-place of God, the "tent" in which He has sojourned among men. We have seen him also among the mass of the godless—atheists in heart—who carry to its height the lawlessness and rebellion of the last days. Here we go back to see how he has broken the bands and cast off the yoke of the Most High. Once an associate of the godly, and moving among the throng of worshipers in the house of God, he is become the persecutor of the righteous, the profaner of his covenant with God and man, his profession all through is shown to be mere subtlety and treacherous wickedness, under which Jerusalem itself becomes like another Babel, and its inhabitants invite a corresponding doom.

These psalms share the character of all prophecy in needing to be put together in order to their full understanding. They are not meant for "private" or "*separate* interpretation" (2 Pet. i. 20). They are connected together by the common title of Maskil as instruction for the men of understanding, the wise who are to instruct others (Dan. xi. 33; xii. 3). Put together, the awful figure of Antichrist emerges clearly enough, and in harmony with prophecies elsewhere, both Christian and Jewish. Like some image formed in the rock, you must

Ps. lv.

[s]PSALM LV.

The apostate.

To the chief musician, on stringed instruments: Maskil of David.

1 (1-3): The invocation of God.
(i.) be present to me.
(ii.) conflict.
(iii.) the evil bared.

GIVE [p]ear, O God, unto my prayer:
and [q]hide not thyself from my supplication.
Attend unto me, and [r]answer me:
I [s]toss to and fro as I complain, and groan.
Because of the voice of the [t]enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked:
for they cast iniquity upon me,
and in anger [u]persecute me.

2 (4-8): Longing for escape.
(i.)
(ii.)
(iii.) the spirit of the dove.

My heart is writhing within me:
and the [v]terrors of death are fallen upon me:
Fear and [w]trembling is come upon me:
and horror hath wrapped me round.
And I said, Oh that I had [x]wings like the dove!
I would fly away, and be at rest.

p Ps. 54. 2.
q *cf.* Ps. 42. 9. Ps. 44. 24.
r Ps. 65. 5. Ps. 86. 7.
s *cf.* Is. 54. 11.
t Ps. 56. 2, etc.
u Ps. 10. 2.
v Ps. 116. 3.
w *cf.* Deu. 28. 65.
x *cf.* Job 3. 17.

catch it at the right angle to discern it; while when there, its features are too marked and many to be possibly mistaken.

The accompaniment of "stringed instruments" is justified as the psalm goes on; though it begins with a wail of sorrow and an inward tumult under which the numerical structure for awhile seems to be lost, but to manifest itself again as faith more firmly lays hold upon divine strength, and the light of a new day begins to penetrate the gloom.

1. The first three verses give us the cry to God, with the cause of the cry,—the voice of the enemy and the oppression of the wicked, by whom the suppliant is traduced as well as met with open violence. The conjunction of these things is too common to need much comment. Slander makes malice take the form of righteousness; and the strongest tyranny finds the necessity of justifying itself after this manner. Involuntarily it does homage to the moral government of God, even while its homage is itself immoral. "They cast iniquity on me," says the sufferer, "and in anger persecute me."

2. The next section dwells upon the misery of the remnant amid the general departure from God. They long to escape from the city which is yet to them the city of God; but defiled, profaned, the Spirit of Christ makes them cry out for separation from it. Accordingly opportunity is given them, as we know (Matt. xxiv. 15 *seq.*), and they are found outside it in the first psalm of this book.

The distress is extreme, and the confusion of mind seems to affect the numerical structure itself, which here at least I am unable to trace in two out of the five verses. This may be, of course, only from dullness of sight on my own part, or because the numbers themselves have not been traced out sufficiently in their application in the sphere of human emotion. Yet the only other place in these psalms in which we have hitherto found such an absolute failure (Ps. x. 8–10) is so near akin to this one as at least to suggest a designed connection between them. The former psalm, like the present, gives us a picture of the wicked one; and there the *alphabetic* construction fails, as well as (and to a greater extent than) the numerical. Thus there seems purpose manifest in this. In the present psalm, however, there is this difference, that the failure is not found in that part of it which speaks of Antichrist himself, but in that which speaks of the effect of the evil in the awful horror and dread which well-nigh overwhelm the godly. This is plainly a great difference, and must justly raise the question again, Is it anything more than a failure of discernment, such as here and there may well be expected in a first endeavor to trace out the numerical clue. On

(iv.) the wilderness-earth.
(v.) the judgment coming.

Lo, I would wander far off;
I would lodge in the [y] wilderness. Selah.
I would hasten my [z] escape
from the rushing wind—the tempest.

3 (9-11): The profanation of the holy city.
(i.) congruous dealing.

[a] Swallow [them] up, Lord! divide their tongue!
for I have seen violence and strife in the [b] city.
Day and night they [c] compass it upon the walls thereof:
vanity and travail are in the midst of it.

(ii.) a city of strife.
(iii.) iniquity manifest.

[d] Yawning depths are in the midst of it:
[e] oppression and deceit depart not from its streets.

4 (12-15): Apostasy.
(i.) of one at peace with him.

For it was [f] not an enemy that reproached me;
then I could have borne it:
nor was it one that had hated me that magnified himself against me:
then I might have [g] hid myself from him.

y *cf.* Mt. 24. 15-21. *cf.* Rev. 12. 14.
z *cf.* Is. 26. 20, 21.
a Ps. 21. 9.
b Is. 1. 21.
c Ps. 59. 6.
d Ps. 10. 8-10.
e Mt. 10. 36. Am. 4. 1.
f Ps. 41. 9. *cf.* Jno. 5. 43.
g *cf.* 1 Sam. 18. 11.

the other hand, it is still possible that as in the tenth psalm the moral disorder is reflected in the structural one.—God's government appearing for a while to be lost in the uprising of human will against it,—so here may be intimated the blur of vision that may be induced by the contemplation of successful wickedness, even on the part of the righteous, and against which the thirty-seventh psalm warns us. In this case, may not the *irregularity* of the alphabetic structure of both the ninth and tenth psalms (even where it does not fail) point to a similar perturbation? especially as only in the mind of man can the government of God lapse at all, even for a moment.

And is not this indeed an evil so great and so universal as to make it necessary to enforce the warning upon us in an exceptional manner? Alas, how the disorder manifest in the world tends to induce a similar disorder, even among those who dread and abhor it! as with an infectious disease, the dread of which increases the susceptibility of infection. How the simple lesson needs to be continually repeated in our ears, that "God sitteth upon the throne, judging right." How little frankly do we accept this first postulate of faith! and if there be but hesitation here, how the vision fails, how the heart sickens and faints, what a collapse is there of strength! And is it not so in the psalm before us?—

"My heart is writhing within me; and the terrors of death are fallen upon me! Fear and trembling is come upon me; and horror hath wrapped me round!"

Then notice how in the next verse the numerals appear again: for not without meaning is it that the dove, the type of heavenly purity and love and sorrow,—the symbol of the Spirit of Christ, as in the gospels,—is named here rather than any other bird. The wing of the dove bore Christ indeed into the scene of sin and misery to deliver men; but here, when grace has been rejected, and the sin of men has ripened as just ready for the harvest, the dove is preparing for her flight away. Holiness now means only separation from stubborn rebellion and implacable enmity to God; and now the solitude of the wilderness attracts her: the earth is become truly that; and judgment is foreseen,—a tempest of wrath, from which she would hasten the escape of those that sigh and cry for these abominations.

3. And now the city is brought before us—Jerusalem; though her name cannot now be named; she does not answer to it. Rather is she now Babylon, and with the doom of Babylon upon her. Violence and strife issue naturally in divided tongues, into which her whilom unity is broken up. Strife characterizes her, and with violence goes about her walls, which instead of shutting out the evil, shut it in. Cavernous depths of wickedness yawn in the midst of her; and openly in her public streets stalk all the time oppression and deceit.

(ii.) an associate.
(iii.) in the house of God.
(iv.) cut off.

But thou, a man [held] as mine [h]equal,
mine [i]associate, and mine intimate!
We took sweet [j]counsel together;
we [k]walked in the house of God amid the throng.
Death shall surprise them;
[l]alive they shall go down to Sheol:
for wickedness is where they sojourn—
in their midst.

h *cf.* 2 Sam. 15. 31.
i *cf.* 2 Sam. 15. 12. *cf.* Jer. 9. 4, 5.
j *cf.* 2 Sam. 16. 20–23.
k *cf.* Ps. 42. 4.
l *cf.* Rev. 19. 20. *cf.* Nu. 16. 31–35.

5 (16-18): God with His own.
(i.) true to Him.
(ii.) and confident.
(iii.) hedged round.

As for me, I [m]call upon God,
and Jehovah shall [n]save me.
Evening, and morning, and noon, I make [o]complaint and groan:
and he will hear my voice.
He hath [p]redeemed my soul in peace that they could not come nigh me;
for [q]many were they about me.

m Ps. 50. 15.
n Ps. 7. 1.
o ver. 2. Ps. 42. 9.
p Ps. 31. 5.
q Ps. 118. 10–12.

6 (19-21): The evil at its height.
(i.) the Unchangeable and the men who change not.

The Mighty heareth and shall afflict them:
even he that [r]abideth of old: (Selah.)
[men] who have no [s]change at all,*
and [t]fear not God.

r Ps. 90. 1–4. Ps. 102. 12, 25–27.
s Ps. 49. 11.
t Ps. 36. 1. Rom. 3. 18.

* *Literally*, "no changes."

4. Now we come to the apostate. Not an open enemy had he been; in that case it would have been easy to turn away from him as such. But he had been one admitted to terms of equality, an associate, an intimate; nor that only, but professedly also among the godly, and among the throngs frequenting the house of God. Thus we see what bonds had been broken through—Godward as well as manward. For him and those with him the psalmist predicts the sudden calamity of the apostates in the wilderness, death surprising them in such a way that Sheol might seem to swallow them up alive. This is another link with prophecy: for it is written of the two great confederates in evil in the fast-hastening day of the Lord, that they shall be taken and cast alive into the lake of fire (Rev. xix. 20).

5. The fifth section of the psalm displays in contrast with all this the assured hope of the righteous. He calls upon God, from whom the wicked had departed; he knows that God will save him. Complain and groan though he may, it is to One who hears his voice. And redemption is realized at last from the midst of many enemies, who are incapable of doing him the harm they seek to do.

6. But again he returns to speak of the wicked one and his company. He sees the Unchangeable and Eternal setting Himself against the unchanging stubbornness of impenitent sinners. Again he singles out one special one among these, marking him out by another sign which is very distinct in prophecy, the breach of the covenant. So the angel says to Daniel of the "prince that shall come," that "he shall confirm a covenant"—make a binding agreement—"with many for one week"—of years; "and in the midst of the week shall he cause sacrifice and oblation to cease." Idolatry takes the place of the worship of the true God: "for the overspreading (or 'wing') of abominations there shall be a desolator" (Dan. ix. 27, *Heb.*). Thus we have the "abomination of desolation" afterwards referred to (chap. xi. 31; xii. 11; Matt. xxiv. 15); and the nature of the broken covenant is plainly shown. Israel back in the land is sheltered by it in the setting up again of their old ritual worship: the "prince" or his representative in the land takes his place with the rest in apparently heartfelt homage to the King of kings. For the first half of the week he is the smooth-tongued hypocrite described in the psalm. Then comes a change; the cessation of pre-

(ii.) breach of the covenant.
(iii.) the heart exposed.

He hath put forth his hands against those at [u]peace with him:
he hath profaned his [v]covenant.
[w]Smooth were the butter- [words] of his mouth,
and his heart was [z]war:
Softer than oil his words,
yet were they drawn [y]swords.

7 (22, 23): The rest at the end.
(i.) faithful to the righteous.
(ii.) destruction of the wicked.

[z]Cast thy burden upon Jehovah, and he shall [a]sustain thee:
he shall [b]never suffer the righteous to be moved.
But thou, O God, shalt bring them down to the [c]pit of destruction:
men of [d]blood and deceit shall not live [e]half their days;
but I will [f]trust in thee.

u vv. 13, 14.
v cf. Dan. 9. 27.
w Ps. 62 4. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 9, 10. *cf.* Mk. 13. 5, 6.
x Ps. 57. 4.
y Ps. 64. 3.
z cf. 1 Pet. 5. 7. *cf.* Phil 4.6, 7.
a Ps. 3. 5. *cf.* Is. 43. 2.
b Ps. 37. 24, 25.
c Ps. 9. 17.
d Ps. 5. 6.
e Prov. 10. 27. Ps.37.35,36. *cf.* Is. 38.10, 11.
f Ps. 31. 1. Ps. 84. 12.

scribed legal offerings; the setting up of idolatry in its place: "he hath put forth his hands against those that were at peace with him; he hath *profaned* the covenant." This completes the instruction of these Maskil psalms.

7. The seventh and last section closes therefore now with the contrary portions of the righteous and the wicked; in which God appears at last as Jehovah—Israel's God. How the covenant-Name here shines out in contrast with all human dependence! That treacherous covenant they had trusted in, and it had deceived them; now, "cast thy burden on Jehovah, and He shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." On the other hand, "Thou, Jehovah, shalt bring *them* down to the pit of destruction: men of blood and deceit shall not live half their days; but *I* will trust in THEE."

Sec. 2.

As the psalms of the former section were connected together by their common *Maskil* character, so those of the present are by the fact that they are all *Michtams*, a title which only occurs elsewhere in connection with the sixteenth psalm. Of the various meanings there referred to, the last two seem best to suit as applied to these. They are epigrammatic, the sharp-cut maxims of faith, which here strengthens itself by them. And that connects plainly with the derivation from the word *catham*, to "engrave," such epigrammatic writing being that found in inscriptions, while it is fitted to engrave itself durably on the memory, as these maxims need to be engraved.*

"Hidden" their meaning certainly is not. We have only as Christians to remember that it is Israel's voice to which we are listening, and therefore Israel's promises that are before us in them, and they are then in general simple enough. In truth God's comfort is not far to seek; whether men will take it or not is another question. "The confirmation of faith" may well be the title of the whole section, as I have given it; and in this way it fitly follows that description of the wicked one with whom the mass of the nation in the latter days will identify themselves. From the contemplation of that terrible scene, the soul needs to withdraw itself into its strongholds, and comfort itself with the assurance of the goodness and the might of God. And these psalms are of this nature, not forgetting the evil, but bringing it into the presence of God, that it may be seen in its weakness and mutability. Then are its instruments so truly "workers of vanity," that it can even be asked, "Shall they escape by vanity?"—this nothingness which belongs to them: are they too feeble to be taken notice of?

* The sixteenth psalm, having to do, as it has, with the wondrous path of the "Leader and Finisher of faith," may well be a Michtam in this way, as furnishing what are to be thus maxims for the life of faith, to be graved upon the heart of the disciple.

SECTION 2. (Ps. lvi.-lx.)
Confirmation of faith.

Ps. lvi.

[1]PSALM LVI.

God's faithfulness His people's strength.

To the chief musician, upon Jonath-elem-rechokim: Michtam of David, when the Philistines took him in [g]Gath.

1 (1-3): Strength in God. (i.) the constant occasion. (ii.) the multitude of foes. (iii.) the sanctuary.

BE [h]gracious to me, O God, for man [i]panteth after me:
all the day long he fighting [j]oppresseth me.
They that [k]watch me pant after me all the day long:
for [l]many are they that fight proudly against me.
What time I am [m]afraid,
I will [n]trust in thee.

2 (4-9): Deliverance and destruction. (i.) the faithfulness of God.

Through God will I [o]praise his word:
in God I have trusted; I fear not:
[p]what can flesh do to me?

[g] *cf.* 1 Sam. 21. 10-15 with Ps. 34, title. *cf.* 1 Sam. 27. 2.
[h] Ps 57. 1. Ps. 86. 3.
[i] Ps. 57. 3. Ezek. 36. 3. Am. 8. 4.
[j] Ps. 42. 9.
[k] Ps. 5. 8. Ps. 59. 3,10.
[l] Ps. 3. 1, 2.
[m] *cf.* 1 Sam. 21. 12 with Ps. 34. 1, 2.
[n] *cf.* 1 Sam. 30. 6. *cf.* Lk. 8. 33 -35.
[o] vv. 10. 11. *cf.* Ps. 19. 7 -11.
[p] Ps. 27. 1. Is. 51. 12. Heb. 13. 5, 6.

PSALM LVI.

The special title of the fifty-sixth psalm, "Upon Jonath-elem-rechokim," the "dove of silence of far off places," has naturally suggested Christ to many interpreters. But the whole connection of the psalm, as well as the contents of it, seem to me against the personal application. The connection with the cry of the last psalm—"Oh that I had the wings of a dove"—(and which is evident) is also, I think, against it. The *Spirit* of Christ is surely in both psalms; but that is a very different thing. The Septuagint is nearer the truth, with its rendering, "Upon the people driven afar off from the holy place"; while the Targum paraphrases it, "Concerning the congregation of Israel, which is like to a silent dove, at the time they are removed far off from the cities." If we remember that in the previous psalm we have seen the remnant of Israel in Jerusalem with antichristian wickedness risen to such a height, as to force upon them the necessity of flight, we shall easily realize in the "dove of far-off places" the remnant escaped and outside the city. They are still in danger, but from an outside enemy, they are wandering (ver. 8), and not shut up.

The historical occasion of the psalm is given us as during David's first flight to Achish, "when the Philistines took him in Gath." Delitzsch says of it that it "exhibits many points of the closest intermingling with the psalms of that period, and thus justifies its inscription." But the connection of the history with the prophetic application is more difficult. The Philistines were of course an outside enemy; and David had against him both these and the people of Israel as well, so that he was a wanderer between perils on either hand. In these respects the remnant's experiences resemble his.

The burden of the psalm is the faithfulness of God as being the strength of His people; and, spite of sorrowful circumstances, the confidence expressed is very bright.

1. The circumstances and the strength found to stand under them are given briefly in the first three verses. The enemies are round about, and men are constantly contending with him and oppressing him. The psalmist describes them as wild beasts panting after him. He hears their loud breathing in pursuit, but checks his fears with the thought of what God is for him: "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee." Perfectly suited to the persecuted people of God at any time. I cannot recognize in such language the experience of the Lord Jesus. For it is here fear of men that is expressed, though checked—the purely personal fear of enemies around, and not the horror of their wickedness. Nor

(ii.) perverters of words.
All the day [q]long they [r]torture my words:
all their [s]devices are against me for evil.
(iii.) the realization.
They [t]band together,—they [u]hide themselves,—
they watch [at] my heels as they [v]wait for my soul.
(iv.) their vanity.
On account of [w]vanity shall they escape?
in anger [x]cast down the peoples, O God!
(v.) divine sympathy.
Thou countest my [y]wanderings:
my [z]tears have been put into thy bottle;
are they not in thy [a]book?
(vi.) victory.
In the day that I [b]call, shall mine enemies [c]turn back:
this I know, because God is [d]for me.

3 (10-13): The glory of God resulting.
(i.) faithfulness.
Through God will I [e]praise the word:
through Jehovah will I praise the word.

q *cf.* Ps.42.3. *cf.* Ps.55.10.
r Ps. 35. 11. *cf.* Mk. 14. 55-59.
s *cf.* Jer. 11. 19. *cf.* Lam. 3. 60-63.
t Ps. 59. 3. *cf.* Jer. 18. 18-23. *cf.* Acts 9. 23.
u Ps. 10. 8.
v Ps. 59. 3. Mi. 7. 2.
w Ps. 4. 2. Ps. 10. 7. Prov. 22. 8.
x Ps. 140. 11. Prov. 12. 7. *cf.* Ps. 18. 36-42.
y *cf.* Heb. 11. 37, 38; *cf.* Mt. 24; 16-22.
z *cf.* Ex. 3. 7; *cf.* Is. 63. 9.
a *cf.* Mal. 3. 16; *cf.* 1 Cor. 3 12-14.
b Ps. 55. 16.
c *cf.* Is. 37. 31-37.
d Ps. 54. 4; Rom. 8. 31; Ps. 118. 6.
e ver. 4.

could the blessed Lord have need to still a fear that was never present by calling up a faith that was never absent.

2. But the psalmist rises to a higher altitude, and the faithfulness of God becomes his triumphant assurance. His word is his dependence, which in its fulfillment by Him will surely gain for itself praise. The living word can never stand without a living God behind it; and it fears not to pledge Him to the fulfillment of its promises. Faith may be timid, but not Scripture; and when we realize the riches it guarantees us, we shall fear no poverty for evermore. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" And so here: "In God I have trusted; I fear not: what can flesh do to me?"

The enemies are still there, but they are powerless: torturing his words; plotting evil against him; uniting together, consulting in secret, dogging the heels, intent on his life. Even so, in all this there is a consciousness of weakness which strangely contrasts with their number and apparent power. After all, they have uneasy suspicion—they fear a fear, as a former psalm expresses it, for God is in the generation of the righteous: for how much may not that count?

Vain it all is, this malice: they are in hands to which they yield at every point, even where most seemingly triumphant. "He maketh the wrath of man to praise Him; and the remainder of it He restrains." So impotent are they, that it can be asked with Elihu (Job xxxv. 6), "If thou sinnest, what doest thou against Him? and if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto Him?" But if this be so, "on account of" this "vanity, shall they escape?" Can He let it go on, unmoved by it? Nay, he replies, not so: show, Lord, that it is not so; "in anger cast down the peoples, O God!"

And this shall be; but the psalmist does not here go on to it. He turns back to think of the tenderness of divine sympathy towards him, amid all the roughness and sorrow of the way. Here is a comfort to which Christianity has added so much that it seems as if it could not rightly have been known before. The Son of man down in our world, and not in a sheltered place, but in the bitterest blast that ever blew there,—this has changed all for him that has seen it. Yet the Spirit of Christ was in the Old Testament, and the revelation of God clothed itself already in the human form, in anticipation of the Word made flesh. "Thou countest my wanderings; my tears have been put into thy bottle: are they not in Thy book?" Tender counterpart, these tears preserved by Him now, to the future wiping them away with His own hand! But they are noted also in His book, just as they fall!

Now the psalmist looks on to the end; and he can be nothing else but confident. God is for him: therefore when he calls, his enemies shall turn back. This he knows.

3. The psalm ends accordingly with the fullest assurance and praise to God.

(ii.) a challenge.
(iii.) the sacrifice of praise.
(iv.) the fruit in walk.

In God have I trusted; I fear not:
what can man do unto me?
Upon me are thy [f]vows, O God:
I will render thank-offerings unto thee.
For thou hast [g]delivered my soul from death;
hast thou not [also] my feet from [h]falling?
that I may [i]walk before God in the light of the [j]living.

Ps. lvii.

[2]PSALM LVII.

Faith's present shelter and final deliverance.

To the chief musician, [k]Al-tashcheth: Michtam of David, when he [l]fled from Saul into the cave.

1 (1-5): Present grace.
(i.) in harmony with faith.

BE [m]gracious to me, O God! be gracious to me;
for in thee hath my soul taken [n]refuge:
yea, in the [o]shadow of thy wings do I take refuge
until [these] depths be [p]overpast.

(ii.) in dependence.

I cry unto God [q]Most High:
to the Mighty that [r]accomplisheth for me.

(iii.) the foresight of deliverance from heaven.

He shall [s]send from heaven, and save me:
[whom] he that [t]panteth after me hath reproached.
Selah.
God shall send forth his [u]loving-kindness and his truth.

f Ps. 50. 14. Ps. 116. 12-14.
g Ps. 116.8,9
h Ps. 37. 23, 24.
i *cf.* Gen. 17. 1.
j Ps. 27. 13. Ps. 142. 5.
k Ps. 58, 59, 75, titles.
l *cf.* 1 Sam. 22. 1. *cf.* 1 Sam. 24. 1-3. *cf.* Ps. 142, title.
m Ps. 56. 1. *cf.* Lk. 18. 7, 8.
n Ps. 46. 1. Ps. 62. 7.
o *cf.* Ruth 2. 12. Ps. 91. 1, 4. *cf.* Matt. 23. 37.
p *cf.* Is. 26. 20. *cf.* Jer. 30. 7-9. *cf.* Matt. 24. 21, 22.
q Ps. 46. 4. Ps. 83. 18.
r *cf.* Is. 38. 14; *cf.* Deut. 32. 36 with Ps. 126. 2, 3.
s *cf.* Is. 64. 1-3; Ps. 18. 16. *cf.* Rev. 12. 13-17.
t Ps. 56. 1, 2;
u *cf.* Ps. 40. 11; *cf.* Is. 63. 7; Ps. 43. 3.

The former strain of confidence is renewed and amplified. He repeats, "Through God will I praise *the* word,"—more abstractly than "*His* word": perhaps, as if there were no word that could be named but His. And then he varies this, claiming God fully as His by the covenant-Name: "Through *Jehovah* will I praise the word." Then he once more puts forth his challenge: "In God I have trusted; I fear not: what can man do to me?" His vowed thank-offerings are ready, too; and he will not fail to have his life also a thank-offering. Like the apostle, who, when he has urged that by Christ we should "offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of the lips, confessing His Name," adds also: "but to do good and to communicate forget not: for with *such sacrifices* God is well pleased" (Heb. xiii. 15, 16). So here, the psalmist realizes that the deliverance of his soul from death, and his feet from falling, is that he "may walk *before God* in the light of the living." This does not mean merely, as Moll says, that he may walk under "divine protection," however much the last phrase may infer this. Nay, he is to walk *before God* who has protected him. And this means what to "walk with God" meant for Enoch, and means for all in the same path ever since,—the simplest expression for a life suited for such companionship.

Psalm LVII.

The Al-tashcheth ("Destroy not") which is in the title of the two following psalms, and the Asaphic seventy-fifth, as well as the present, is hard from its brevity to understand, as well as from its apparent applicability in so many ways. The historical occasion of the psalm also, while there is no difficulty attending it, has, in the same way, no special noteworthiness that I can discover. An opportunity this which men will take to disparage Scripture in favor of their own ignorance; but the stars do not the less shine because our sight may be too dull to behold them. Thank God, they do not!

In the psalm itself, there is no peculiar difficulty. It goes on from present shelter to future deliverance; and these are (speaking broadly) the two parts into which it is divided, each part being closed with the refrain.

1. In the first part the soul casts itself upon divine grace, as that which will

(iv.) tested.

My soul is [v]among lions:
I lie among them that are on [w]fire,—
children of men, whose [x]teeth are spears and arrows,
and their tongue a sharp sword.

(v.) God with men.

Be thou [y]exalted above the heavens, O God!
thy glory over all the [z]earth!

2 (6-11): The testimony of salvation.

(i.) congruous dealing.

They had prepared a [a]net for my steps,—
my soul was bowed,—
they had digged a [b]pit before me:
they are [c]fallen into the midst of it. Selah.

(ii.) confirmation of heart.

My [d]heart is [e]fixed, O God, my heart is fixed:
I will [f]sing and psalm.

(iii.) the worship of Israel.

[g]Awake, my glory!
awake, psaltery and harp!
I will [h]awake the dawn.

v Ps. 7. 2. Ps. 10. 9. *cf.* Ezek. 22. 23–27.
w *cf.* Is. 9. 18, 19.
x Prov. 30. 14. Ps. 52. 2. *cf.* Rev. 13. 2, 11.
y ver. 11. Ps. 108. 5. *cf.* Is. 30. 18–26. *cf.* Ps. 8. 1.
z Ps. 72. 19. *cf.* Is. 6. 3. *cf.* Hab. 3. 3.
a Mi. 7. 2. *cf.* Mk. 13. 5, 6.
b *cf.* Mt. 22 15–46.
c Ps. 7. 15, 16. Ps. 9. 15. *cf.* Esth. 7, 10; *cf.* Dan. 6. 4–8, 24.
d Ps. 108. 1–5.
e Ps. 112. 7; Ps. 86. 11.
f Ps. 27. 6.
g Ps. 30. 12.
h *cf.* Is. 26. 19; *cf.* Lk. 9. 32; *cf.* 2 Sam. 23. 4.

surely meet the faith that takes refuge in it. The bird that, according to the ancient story, would shelter itself from the pursuer in the bosom of man may have cause to repent its confidence; but who shall ever say that his confidence in God has deceived him? Nay, rather, when all other trust is found to be in vain, this becomes the only and all-sufficient one. "Depths" of evil and abysses of sorrow there are indeed on every side; but the shadow of Jehovah's wings is not merely a place of escape but a home rest, where the Eternal Light subdues itself to our weakness, and yet is an infinite glory of truth and holiness and fostering care.

How sweet then may be the self-abandonment to Love so competent: "I cry unto God most High: to the Mighty that accomplisheth for me." Where He has charge of all one's concerns, how surely shall they all prosper; how deep may be the peace resulting.

But there is not merely an indefinite confidence. The future has been marked out for us by Him to whom all His works are known from the beginning; and Israel's portion glows in the page of prophecy, for faith to possess itself beforehand of it. David is himself the forerunner of the later prophets, the leader of that magnificent choir of divine song. Here he foresees the intervention of God for His people: "He shall send from heaven and save me"—"God shall send forth His mercy and truth." In the meanwhile, however, there is plenty to test this confidence; and patience must have its perfect work. "My soul is among lions: I lie among them that are on fire,—children of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword."

But he cries in distress no more. His heart is full of another longing, in which prophecy and prayer are found together, and God fills the whole scene. But then, and thus only, man's blessing is accomplished, as it is indeed by Man—the Son of man—that the prayer is fulfilled. "Be Thou exalted, O God, above the heavens" has its answer in the psalm of the Son of man, the eighth psalm, "Thou hast set Thy glory above the heavens," while "glory over all the earth" is the well-known result of the uprising of the Sun of righteousness in the appearing of the same blessed Person. God is with men—in Man: a consummation to which these psalms are leading on.

2. Accordingly the second part is occupied with the salvation of Israel—personated by the psalmist—and the blessing following for the earth. It begins with the recompense awarded to their enemies in divine righteousness. They have dug a pit and fallen into it. According to the eternal law of retribution, they have been taken in their own craftiness. Israel is delivered, and their

(iv.) among the nations.
(v.) God with men.
(vi.) the victory of God.

I will praise thee, Lord, among the [i]peoples:
I will sing psalms to thee among the races [of men.]
For thy mercy is [j]great unto the heavens,
and thy [k]truth unto the clouds.
Be thou [l]exalted above the heavens, O God!
thy glory over all the earth!

Ps. lviii.

[3]PSALM LVIII.

God manifested in judgment.

To the chief musician, [m]Al-tashcheth: Michtam of David.

1 (1, 2): The cause.
(i.) the question of righteousness.
(ii.) deceit and violence.

IS righteousness indeed [n]silent? do ye speak it?*
do ye [o]judge uprightly, ye sons of men?
Yea, in heart ye work [p]deceitfulness:
ye weigh out the [q]violence of your hands in the earth.

2 (3-5): The hostility of evil.
(i.) innate.
(ii.) hardening in malignity.
(iii.) shut up from external influence.

The wicked are estranged from the [r]womb:
they go astray as soon as born, [s]speaking lies.
Poison have they, like the [t]poison of a serpent:
[they are] like the deaf adder, that [u]stoppeth her ear:
Which hearkeneth not to the voice of the [v]charmers,
of one using skillful enchantment.

i Ps. 126.1,2. *cf.* Is. 2.1-3. *cf.* Is. 66.19.
j Ps. 36. 5. Ps. 103. 11. Mi. 7. 18.
k Ps. 119. 89, 90. *cf.* Jer. 33. 20, 21.
l ver. 5.
m Ps. 57, title.
n Is. 1. 21-23. Is. 59.14,15. Ps.94.20,21.
o Ps. 82. 2-8. Is. 59. 4. Jer. 5. 4, 5.
p Jer. 9. 1-8. Mi. 7. 3-6.
q Is. 10. 1, 2. Mi. 3. 8-12.
r Ps. 51. 5. *cf.* Matt.15. 19, 20 with Jno. 3. 3-7.
s Ps. 52. 3. Jer. 6. 13.
t Ps. 140. 3. Rom. 3. 13. *cf.* Gen. 3. 1 with John 8. 44.
u *cf.* Is. 6. 9, 10. *cf.* 1 Tim.4. 2.
v Jer. 8. 17. *cf.* Ezek.33. 31, 32. *cf.* Lk. 7. 31-34.

* Or else, "Do ye indeed speak the silence of righteousness?" or "in silence speak righteousness?" Some, to escape the difficulty, alter the pointing of one word, and say: "Do ye indeed speak righteousness, ye gods!" *i. e.*, "judges." I follow the London Translation of the Old Testament, on the basis of the French and German of J. N. Darby.

heart, already turned to Him, is established as His by the grace shown them. "They will sing and psalm": not only themselves praise, but make the mute things vocal;—which is just man's office as head of the lower creation. Israel's worship accordingly begins: her glory awakes; psaltery and harp awake; and this music of hers awakes the dawn of day for the whole earth. She is the herald of salvation for the nations also, the "first-born," to be followed by the later-born. She praises among the gathered peoples, and sings her psalms among the races of men.

God is with men. His *mercy* is great *unto* the heavens:—not, as before and afterwards said, His glory *above* them. The heavenly people will be witnesses of this mercy; and the parallel of His "truth unto the *clouds*" would seem to speak of heavenly influences for the earth,—whether the rule of the saints with Christ specifically, or in general the windows of heaven open, no restraint of those ministries from above, upon which all blessing for the earth depends. God is with men; but the supreme triumph of divine love is found even beyond and above this, God *in* Man, the visible glory and consummation of grace in Christ set *above* the heavens, while embracing all the earth in the lustre of His beams.

PSALM LVIII.

We have now the manifestation of God in judgment, judgment in man's hand having altogether failed. One would say that this had regard in the first place to the mass in Israel, where especially righteousness should have been found; but there does not seem any reason for confining it to these, except what may be derived from the fact of the next psalm plainly contemplating the judgment of the nations. The present one, like the last, is of very simple character, and therefore cannot receive any extended examination.

1. The first two verses show us the cause of this manifestation. Righteousness

3 (6–11): The manifestation.
(i.) in power.
(ii.) in defeat of the enemy.
(iii.) fully realized.
(iv.) vanity of the wicked.
(v.) the recompense.
(vi.) control of the evil.

O God, [w]break their teeth in their mouth:
break out the cheek-teeth of the young [x]lions, Jehovah!
They shall [y]melt as waters that run off:
when he aimeth his arrows, they shall be as [z]blunted.*
They shall be as a slug that [a]dissolveth as it goes:—
[as] the [b]untimely birth of a woman, that hath not seen the sun.
Before your pots can [c]feel the thorns,—
green or burning, they are [d]whirled away.
The righteous shall be [e]glad when he seeth the vengeance:
he shall wash his footsteps in the [f]blood of the wicked.
And men shall say, [g]Verily, there is fruit for the righteous:
verily, there is a God who [h]judgeth in the earth.

* Literally, "cut off."

w Job 4. 8–10. Job 29. 17. Ps. 3. 7.
x Ps. 57. 4.
y Ps. 37. 9, 20, 36. Ps. 112. 10.
z Ps. 46. 9. Ps. 76. 3.
a *cf.* Am. 2. 9. Mal. 4. 1.
b Job 3. 16. *cf.* Eccl. 6. 3.
c Is. 5. 24. Ps. 64. 7. Is. 29. 5.
d Ps. 1. 4. Prov. 14. 32.
e Ps. 64. 10. *cf.* Jer. 51. 48. *cf.* Rev. 18. 20.
f Ps. 68. 23. *cf.* Gen. 27. 29. *cf.* Gen. 50. 27. *cf.* Esth. 9. 15, 16. Ps. 149. 6–9; Zech. 10. 5; *ctr.* Rom. 12. 19, 20.
g Ps. 107. 42, 43; Is. 34. 1–8.
h Is. 26. 9, 10, 11; Ps. 9. 16.

is silent upon earth; and that where men profess it most, in judgments given to maintain it. God must thus Himself arise for judgment. Deceit has taken the place of uprightness in the heart; and violence is carefully weighed out, as if it were justice.

2. Then the inveterate hostility of the wicked to what is good is shown. Evil is innate in them. They are aliens from God from birth, the falsehood in which they live being wholly in opposition to His truth. The old serpent was "a liar from the beginning, and a murderer"; and with these also there is poison, serpent-like; and they harden themselves in malignity, as the adder which is reputed to stop the ear and render itself inaccessible to the charmer's voice, whatever might be his skill.

3. The judgment of God is then denounced on them. He is prayed to break out the teeth of the lions and make them powerless. And at once the psalmist foresees and predicts the judgment for which he has prayed. The hostile army melts away like waters running off; they have fought their lost battle but with headless arrows. True, a defeated army may recover itself and regain its ground; but this is like the melting of a slug, which is its irremediable dissolution; or like the untimely birth of a woman, which disappoints all the hopes that have been raised by it, and has no future. Nay, they are like thorns which have scarcely warmed the pots under which they are placed, before the sudden violence of a tempest scatters them abroad. The result is that for the righteous recompense is found at last; and men learn that there is fruit for such, and a God who in judgment can put down the rampant evil.

Psalm LIX.

The next psalm presents the visitation of the world, the last being apparently thus (and as the opening verses would seem to indicate) the judgment in Israel. Its scope is therefore far wider than its occasion would suggest, as the fifth verse plainly shows, where God is appealed to visit all the nations, and that as Jehovah, God of Israel. This agrees with their being seen where the prophecy of Zechariah and others shows them to be gathered when the Lord appears—around the city (impliedly Jerusalem).

The ninth and seventeenth verses compared show, more plainly than the last psalm, the Michtam character.

Ps. lix.

[a]PSALM LIX.

The visitation of the Gentile world.

To the chief musician, [i]Al-tashcheth, Michtam of David, [j]when Saul sent, and they watched the house to put him to death.

1 (1-5): The occasion.
(i.) the uprise.

DELIVER me from mine [k]enemies, my God:
[l]set me on high from them that are rising up against me.

(ii.) men of blood.

Deliver me from [m]workers of vanity:
and save me from [n]men of blood.

(iii.) the case laid before God.

For, lo, they [o]lie in wait for my soul:
the violent are [p]gathered against me,
[q]not for revolt or sin of mine, Jehovah.

(iv.) testing invited.

They run and prepare themselves without fault [of mine];
[r]awake to meet me, and [s]examine.*

(v.) the nations with God.

Thou, therefore, [t]Jehovah, [u]God of hosts, the [v]God of Israel, awake to visit [w]all the nations:
show not grace to any [x]plotters of iniquity. Selah.

2 (6-8): Opposed.
(i.) the disappointed pack.

They return at [y]evening; they make a [z]noise like a dog;
and they go [a]round about the city.

(ii.) their words swords.

Behold, they belch with their mouth;
[b]swords are in their lips:
for [c]who is he that heareth?

(iii.) as before Jehovah.

But thou, Jehovah, [d]laughest at them:
thou hast all the nations in derision.

* *Literally*, "see."

a cf. Ps. 48. 4, 5; *cf.* Mi. 4. 11-13; *cf.* Zech. 14. 2, 3. *b* Ps. 57. 4; *ctr.* Rev. 19. 15, 21. *c cf.* Ex. 5. 2; Ps. 10. 11-13; Ezek. 8. 12; Ezek. 9. 9. *d* Ps. 2. 4; Ps. 37. 13 with Is. 37. 22-36.

i Ps. 58, etc.
j 1 Sam. 19. 11-17.
k Ps. 64. 1. *cf.* Is. 62. 8 with Is. 66. 5, 6.
l Ps. 27. 5, 6. *cf.* Is. 33. 14-16.
m Ps. 64. 2. Ps. 92. 7, 9.
n cf. 2 Sam. 21. 1. Ps. 5. 6. Ezek. 7. 23-27.
o Ps. 10. 9. Mi. 7. 2.
p Ps. 56. 6. Ps. 140.1, 2.
q Ps. 7. 3-5. *cf.* Ps. 43. 1.
r Ps. 35. 23. *cf.* Is. 51. 9.
s cf. Ps. 139. 23.
t Ps. 50. 1.
u cf. Jer. 38. 17. *cf.* Am. 4. 13.
v cf. Jer.7.3, 21.
w Jer.10. 25. Ob. 15. Mi. 5. 15.
x Ps. 25. 3. *cf.* Is. 24.16. *cf.* Hab. 1. 13.
y cf. Zeph.3. 3, 4. *cf.* Jer. 6. 4. ver. 14.
z cf. Is. 17. 12-14.

1. The first section gives the cause (or at least the immediate occasion) of the judgment. Enemies are rising up against the psalmist, workers of vanity and men of blood. He lays his case before Jehovah, Israel's covenant-God, declaring his blamelessness in the matter. He reiterates this, and invites Him to come in and see if it be not so. Jehovah is then again invoked, and specifically as the God of Israel, to visit all the nations, and to stubborn plotters of iniquity to show no grace.

2. Then a brief section puts in contrast the parties opposed. On the one hand the enemies, like a pack of dogs, howling with disappointment, as they roam about in the evening gloom, the words upon their brave lips swords, because they apprehend no hearer. But on the other side is One who hears nevertheless, and, if He keep silence, does so as counting all the restless attempts of men for His dethronement at their proper worth. He "laughs" at them: His appreciation of their folly being put, as commonly, in strong human language. Here, then, are the contestants in this strange, abhorrent warfare of the creatures with their God.

3. They have not sanctified Him: He must therefore, perforce, for He is holy, sanctify Himself in them, and at their cost. And this, as we have seen elsewhere, and more than once, is the meaning of the "ban" (Lev. xxvii. 28, 29, *notes*). We have seen it in Hermon (Ps. xlii., *notes*) dominating, in some sense, the land of Israel. The principle of it has been enforced in Israel in the last psalm. Here we find it in the wider sphere of the Gentile nations. God hears the cry of His people, suffering at the hands of those who have cast off all restraint,—a cry which the psalmist here utters in direct appeal to Him. "My

3 (9-13): The ban upon evil.
(i.) God my strength.
(ii.) His help.
(iii.) that they may be remembered.
(iv.) their indictment for sinful ways.
(v.) and final recompense.

My strength! I [e]wait upon thee:
for God is my [f]high tower.
My God will be before me with his [g]mercy:
God shall [h]make me see [my desire] on those that watch me.
[i]Slay them not, lest my people [j]forget:
make them [k]wander, by thy power;
and bring them down, O Lord our [l]shield.
[For] the sin of their [m]mouth,—[for] the word of their lips,—
let them be taken in their [n]pride;
and for [o]cursing and lying [which] they utter.
Make an [p]end in wrath, make an end, that they be no more:
and let them [q]know that God ruleth in Jacob,
unto the [r]ends of the earth. Selah.

4 (14-17): The experience.
(i.) the disappointed pack.
(ii.) craving prey.

And so in the [s]evening they return:
they make a noise like a dog,
and go round about the city.
They wander about for [t]food,
and stay the [u]night if they be not satisfied.

e Ps. 62. 1, 2, 5. *cf.* Is. 40. 28-31.
f Ps. 9. 10. Ps. 94. 20-22.
g Ps. 57. 3. Is. 55. 3.
h Ps. 54. 7. *cf.* Is. 66.23, 24.
i *cf.* Is. 16. 12-14.
j Ps. 106. 13.
k ver. 15. *cf.* Ezek. 29. 12-16.
l Gen. 15. 1, etc.
m *cf.* Ps. 12. 4. *cf.* 2 Pet. 2. 18. *cf.* Dan. 11. 36.
n Ps. 10. 2. *cf.* Is. 25.11, 12.
o Ps. 10. 7.
p Is. 10. 23. Rom. 9. 28.
q Ps. 58. 11.
r *cf.* Ps.72.8. *cf.* Zech. 9. 9, 10.
s ver. 6. t *cf.* Ps. 14. 4; *cf.* Ps. 27. 2. u *cf.* Is. 29. 7, 8.

Strength," he cries, "I wait upon thee: for God is my high tower." Safe he will be here, lifted up upon that glorious elevation, far above the rage of his adversaries, though to human eyes right amongst them; and therefore he says, "My God will be before me with His mercy; and God shall make me see my desire on those that watch me,"—the keen-eyed wild beasts ready for a spring.

But he cares not for mere extermination; nor is it enough that the enemies should be removed. He realizes the lesson that Israel had to learn in these enemies of theirs, who both in their presence and their removal are but signs, either of divine anger or its passing away. Hasty removal would not do, therefore. The lesson must be rightly learned, so as to abide in them; for it is the lesson of sin and its bitter fruit. "Slay them not," therefore, he says: not meaning that that is not to be in the end, for presently he will be found saying the opposite of that; but keep them sufficiently before the eyes of the people so that the lesson of their doom may take effect: for it is still the lesson of divine holiness and of sin's necessary judgment. "Slay them not, lest my people forget: make them wander by thy power; and bring them down, O Lord our shield." Thus it would be their own doom for so many centuries, that would be repeated in the case of these their enemies.—an impressive reminder of God's equal ways.

Their indictment follows, *their* ways, which invite and necessitate judgment: the sin of their mouth, the pride of their heart, their profanity and falsehood. For this comes at last the full recompense, not indeed the eternal judgment, but as to the earth which they have polluted with their misdeeds, and which now in its own interests casts them forth. At last it shall be known, even by them, in the blow that falls upon them, that there is a God who rules in Jacob—none the less plainly when he is seen as "Jacob"; and also to the ends of the earth. In this utter consumption from the earth, the ban is fully executed.

4. In the last section of the psalm we have the experience, the brief rehearsal by delivered Israel, of the story in its simplest elements. Again we see the hungry dogs uttering in the twilight their howl of disappointment; the lusts that crave and conquer and madden them for the prey that after all passes out of their reach. The evening deepens into night, and still the dogs are there; but morning comes and joy, and the phantoms of the night are vanished. In the

(iii.) the morning-praise.

But *I* will [v]sing of thy power:
yea, I will sing aloud in the [w]morning of thy mercy:
for thou hast been my high tower and refuge,
in the [x]day of my strait.

(iv.) of One tested and proved.

Unto thee, my strength, will I psalm:
for God [hath been] my [y]high tower, my merciful God.

[v] Ps. 27. 6.
[w] Ps. 49. 14. Ps. 57. 8. *cf.* Hos. 6. 1-3.
[x] Ps. 9. 9. Nah. 1. 7.
[y] ver. 9.

morning they sing aloud of the mercy that has been with them. God has abundantly fulfilled their prayer. He has been their high tower and refuge in the day of their strait. Well may the "Michtam" ending speak of it as what shall now be forever on their hearts: "Unto Thee, my Strength, I will sing: for God *has been* my high tower,—my merciful God."

Psalm LX.

The closing psalm of this Michtam series fills very plainly its place as a fifth psalm. It speaks on the one hand of disciplinary dealings of God with His people under which they have suffered, and on the other, of God turning again to be with them, after the discipline has done its work. Again, it is a Deuteronomic psalm, as contemplating restored Israel, like the Israel of the wilderness of old, just ready to enter upon her inheritance in the land, to "divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth." This also shows, as we saw in the last one, how far beyond the immediate occasion which prompted them, these prophetic psalms reach. To "*divide* Shechem" supposes a new occupancy of the land, such as could not, one would say, at all connect with the Syro-Edomitish war to which the title refers; and such inapplicable things in an inspired composition may well have been permitted expressly to prevent the thought of the immediate application being the whole or the main thing. And this is the case probably with all prophecies. The Spirit of God makes the object which is immediately in view to stand for some object connected with that final consummation, to which as a matter of hope or warning He is constantly directing our attention,—on which all prophetic lines converge. Thus it is that Peter gives us as of primary importance his noted canon of hermeneutics, that "no prophecy of the Scripture is of private"—literally, "its own"—"interpretation." To detach it from the general body of the prophetic Scripture is necessarily to misread it, and pervert it from its proper place and use.

Shushan-eduth, "the lily of testimony," in the title here, naturally carries us back to the forty-fifth psalm, with its "lilies"—*shoshannim*. And it is as natural to think of the fourth verse here in explanation of the "testimony": "Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee, that they may stand up because of the truth." As the forty-fifth psalm also is "a song of the beloved" or "of loves," so here the fifth verse follows the fourth with the prayer, "that thy beloved ones may be delivered." Israel is evidently the "lily of the testimony"; and it is "among the thorns,"—in tribulation, out of which it is brought in triumph by the power and grace of God.

"*Michtam* of David, to teach," is surely not difficult to understand, if the character of every *michtam* was epigrammatic, and to give maxims of faith, worthy to be durably engraved upon the memory. If this be the purport of it also, some special emphasis must be put upon the "teaching" in this case, which would suit well also with the character of this psalm, previously noticed, as a deuteronomic fifth.

The psalm has twelve verses, altered from the usual division into 4 x 3 by the shortening of the second section by one verse, which is added to the last one.

1. The first section is the language of conviction on the part of the latter-day remnant, speaking for the nation. They own that in the ruin into which they have been brought, God's hand has been against them. It is He who has cast

Ps. lx.

[5]PSALM LX.

The presence of God with His people after disciplinary dealings.

To the chief musician, upon [z]Shushan-eduth: Michtam of David, to teach: [a]when he strove with the Syrians of Mesopotamia, and with the Syrians of Zobah; when Joab returned, and smote of Edom in the valley of salt, twelve thousand.*

1 (1-3): Conviction. (i.) of abandonment. (ii.) convulsion.

O GOD, thou hast [b]cast us off, thou hast [c]scattered us:
thou hast been [d]angry: [e]restore us again!
Thou hast made the land to [f]tremble,
thou hast rent it:
[g]heal the breaches thereof, for it shaketh.

(iii.) the inner realization.

Thou hast made thy people experience† hard things:
thou hast given us to [h]drink the wine of trembling.

2 (4, 5): The appeal for deliverance. (i.) on account of identification with the truth of God.

Thou hast given a [i]standard to them that fear thee,
that they may [j]stand up because of truth. Selah.

* In 2 Sam. viii. 12 (*q. v.*) the victory is in the Hebrew copies over Aram (Syria), but "Edom" is manifestly right. It is ascribed there also to David as king, instead of Joab as general; of whom Abishai (named in I Chron. xviii. 12) was probably the lieutenant. The difference in numbers also (Sam. and Chron., eighteen thousand) may be the difference between those slain in the main battle, as compared with the whole contest.

† *Literally*, "see."

z Ps. 80, title.
a *cf.* 2 Sam. 8. 1-14. *cf.* 1 Chr. 18. 1-13.
b Ps. 44. 9. Ps. 89. 38-45. *cf.* Rom. 11. 1-5, 25, 26.
c *cf.* Is. 5. 5-7.
d Ps. 74. 1-3. *cf.* Is. 12. 1.
e Ps. 85. 1-7. Jer. 12. 15. Zech. 10. 6-12.
f *cf.* Is. 24. 18-20. *cf.* Jer. 4. 23-29. *cf.* Ezek. 38. 19-23.
g Is. 30. 26. Jer. 30. 17. Hos. 6. 1-3.
h Ps. 75. 8. Is. 51. 17 Jer. 25. 15-18. Ezek. 23. 31-35. *ctr.* Is. 51. 21-23.
i *cf.* Ex. 17. 15; *cf.* Is. 11. 10-12; *cf.* Is. 49. 22.
j *cf.* Zech. 9. 16.

them off and scattered them: *He* has been displeased. They own it,—own, therefore, their guilt, and plead for restoration.

The figures of the second verse are those of an earthquake which has rent the land, and with which it is still shaking. An earthquake is a common figure of social convulsions, which, though they come from beneath, are signs of divine displeasure. All the bonds that unite men together have their security in that which unites them to God. Let this be broken through, there must be "breaches" between man and man; the blow which shatters the political fabric coming from below—from the volcanic heavings of fermenting elements that lie everywhere below the surface, the passions of men ready always to discharge themselves, if the repression of the divine hand be removed. "Earthquakes in divers places" the Lord associates with other signs of the approaching end (Matt. xxiv. 7); and the sympathy between man and nature (which has been commonly recognized, but which the occupation with mere material causes leads men to overlook or deny) may well manifest itself in literal outbreaks of this nature. God warns man who will not otherwise hear, by such appeals to his grosser senses; real intelligence would find in them, beyond this, the parables of divine speech.

The convulsions of the land the psalmist interprets in their inner meaning. It is the wine of trembling which God has been causing His people to drink. He has given them up to intoxication, to find the strength of a cup sweet enough to the taste at first, in result the confusion of all their faculties.

2. But there is still ground of appeal to God, and that in effect because of His whole nature. His truth and His love abide, and may be the sure confidence of His people in their distress. The psalmist has already uttered that word, "Thy people," a relationship which for long Israel has had no right to claim. But when they shall accept the punishment for their iniquity, then shall their faithful God be ready with His mercy, as He has promised. For "it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations whither Jehovah thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto Jehovah thy God, and shalt obey His voice according to all that I have commanded thee this

(ii.) save Thy beloved.

That thy [k]beloved ones may be delivered,
save with thy [l]right hand, and answer me.

[k] Deu. 7. 7, 8. Deu. 33. 3. Hos. 11. 1, 4. Jer. 31. 3; Zeph. 3. 17; Ps. 108. 6-13. [l] Ps. 17. 7; Is. 41. 10.

day, thou and thy children, with all thy heart and with all thy soul, that then Jehovah thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee" (Deut. xxx. 1-3).

Thus and in these circumstances will Israel be able to claim God as their God in the days to which these psalms, as we have seen, look forward. And thus the psalmist can now speak of a "standard" which God has put into the hands of those that fear Him, that they may "up-standard themselves," as Delitzsch puts it, "because of the truth." It is hard to express the thought without circumlocution, in English; but the giving them a standard acknowledges them in their corporate relationship,—puts them together, makes of a defeated rabble an army,—and, by His doing it, takes them once more as His own. So that now in lifting the standard, they lift themselves up,—they stand up: they are nationalized again, as really the people of God.

The last words here, "because of truth," are difficult because of their abstract character. The word (*qoshet**) occurs only once beside (Ps. xxii. 21), where it is translated "certainty"; and the Chaldaic form is found twice in Daniel (ii. 47; iv. 37), in both cases rendered "truth." These passages favor the meaning suggested by the context, that it refers to the absolute fidelity of God to the word He has spoken. His immutable promise is indeed itself a standard under which they may gather with perfect assurance: it is "exact, precise truth," as Schultens renders it, "weighed, as it were, in the evenest balance."

But *truth* does not dwell alone, with God. His heart goes with it. So the psalmist has another plea,—an appeal to the other side of the divine nature: "that Thy *beloved* ones may be delivered, save with Thy right hand, and answer me." How good to know that God has a heart; and that, not a Master, but a Father's arms, welcome the wanderers! It is the same story essentially, whether we read it in the Old Testament or in the New: for God is the same; only in the New Testament the sun has burst through all the clouds. God was always Light: He now is "*in* the light."

3. Possession of the land is at once anticipated. "God has spoken in His holiness: I will rejoice; I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth." God has spoken in His *holiness:* in His grace to them surely, but grace has brought them into true-hearted subjection to Him, so that it is in holiness He can act for them. Israel is in fact now to be the proclaimer of divine holiness to the ends of the earth. But divine favor towards Israel is inseparably connected with their possession of the land; at once therefore they anticipate this. They are going to divide Shechem on the west of Jordan, and the valley of Succoth on the east side: to take possession of both sides of the river. Only these two places are named; but these imply that all the rest is theirs. Shechem and Succoth do not indeed at first sight seem like representative places, especially the latter; and yet in some sense they must be: there must be some special suitability in them to express the divine thought as to this re-possession of what they had lost before. They are not again to lose it; and notice, to begin with, that they are now in the track of their father Abraham. Jacob's name connects itself with both places; but his record in connection with them is one of failure, and has no pleasant memory attaching to it. In Abraham's case it is far otherwise. Shechem is the first place in which he rests after reaching the land, and there it is that he has the first promise *of the land itself.* Shechem means "shoulder," which Issachar afterwards (like the nation hitherto) "bowed, to bear, and became a servant for tribute," imposed by masters which he had preferred to God.

* The Septuagint reads "the bow" (*qesheth* instead of *qoshet*), and of course changes the whole meaning: "Thou hast given a token to them that fear thee, that they might *flee from the bow.*" This it is needless to discuss, as it has no probability in its favor; though the Vulgate follows it, and such critics as Cheyne naturally prefer it.

3 (6-8): Possession anticipated. (i.) from the divine promise.

God hath spoken in his [m] holiness:
I will exult, I will [n] divide [o] Shechem,
and mete out the [p] valley of Succoth.

19. 51 with Ezek. 47. 13-23. Josh. 13. 27; *cf.* Is. 40. 1, 2.

m cf. Ps. 89. 35. Ex. 15. 11. Ps. 93. 5.

n cf. Josh.

o Gen. 12. 6, 7; Gen. 33. 18-20; *cf.* Ps. 110. 3.

p Gen. 33. 17;

Abraham bows his shoulder to God at the oak Moreh, ("instructor,") to learn of Him, and to find blessing at His hand. Shechem stands thus for the spirit of obedience, as it was in fact afterward the place at which Israel heard the law, with its blessings and curses, proclaimed when they entered the land under Joshua. The history soon showed indeed that they knew not the meaning of it; but when they enter the land under the *new* covenant, it will be with the law written upon their heart. The spirit of obedience will now therefore be fully theirs; so that they will for the first time be able to take complete possession of (or "divide") Shechem. How could their tenure of the land under the "new covenant," and in fulfillment (for the first time really) of the promise given to Abraham *there*, be better expressed?

But what of the "valley of Succoth"? There seems no reference here to the history at all: there is no notice of it except in that part of Jacob's which seems to be failure throughout. On the other hand, the types speak with the clearest and most beautiful significance. Succoth means "booths" or "tabernacles"; and it is the word used for that "feast of tabernacles" which is the last of Israel's sacred year, and which, as the commemoration of their wilderness wanderings as ended, by those now in the land, carries them on in figure to those millennial days in which their longer wanderings as strangers among the Gentiles shall be over forever, and their final rest be come. Thus Succoth follows Shechem here in a most beautiful manner, and the two together establish the prophetic meaning of the psalm conclusively.

But now the tribes appear as if gathering to enter upon their inheritance. Again, only representative names are given. "Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of my head; Judah is my lawgiver." Four names only are here; and of these Gilead is only part of Manasseh. They must be surely significant, as those preceding them have been seen to be: as, let us rather say, everything in Scripture is. Let us try to learn the significance.

Gilead is given by Gesenius as meaning, "hard, rocky"; but there seems, on the other hand, reason for connecting it rather with Jacob's Galeed (Gen. xxxi. 47), "a heap of witness." It would be thus in remarkable antithesis with Manasseh, with which it is linked, and which means "forgetting." A heap of witness is for the very purpose of making forgetfulness impossible.

Manasseh as the natural first-born of Joseph we have read elsewhere (Gen. xlviii., *notes*) as the first principle of spiritual "increase.": "*forgetting* that which is behind," says the apostle, "I press on." But Manasseh has a son, Machir, who is the father of Gilead, and whose name approaches his as closely as possible, meaning "one who recollects," Spiritually, there is no incongruity with all this contrariety: we forget what is behind in order to keep in remembrance what our goal is; and thus one springs out of the other. "The memorial heap" also, as Fausset well observes, "marked the crisis in Jacob's life, when he became severed from his Syrian kindred, and henceforth a sojourner in and heir of Canaan."

Gilead it is we have here, and not Machir; and then it is to be considered that Gilead is not just Galeed, even though the meaning be identical, as indeed the words are. A heap of witness is that we may not forget, but the tribe-name means forgetting: here, as we have seen, Israel is ending her long history of sin and sorrow, to enter into possession of her glorious future—her home with God. On the one hand, what more natural than the desire to forget so sad a story? And this, too, the God of grace has provided for by the sweet assurance pictured for Israel in her day of atonement, when the scapegoat bears the sins of the people into a "land cut off." And this brings once again the new covenant before us, in which God says, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

(ii.) the allied tribes.

[q] Gilead is mine, and [r] Manasseh is mine:
[s] Ephraim also is the strength of my head;
[t] Judah is my ruler.

[q] Gen. 31. 47-53. Num. 32. 39, 40. *cf.* Zech. 10. 10; *cf.* Ezek. 16. 60-63; *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 10. [r] Josh. 17. 1-11; *cf.* Ezek. 48. 4; *cf.* Gen. 41. 51 with Is. 65. 16-18. [s] Josh. 16; *cf.* Is. 11. 13; *cf.* Jer. 31. 9, 18-20; *cf.* Hos. 14. 8. [t] Gen. 49. 10; Josh. 15; *cf.* Joel 3. 1; *cf.* Is. 60. 6, 18.

And many have a difficulty in reconciling this with such a scripture as that which Ecclesiastes ends with, that "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." This is, of course, the Old Testament: but the New has what is similar, and in express application to Christians: "For we must all appear"—or "be made manifest"—"before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. v. 10).

That this is a very different thing from the judgment of the person "according to his works," which is the principle of the final judgment at the "great white throne" (Rev. xx. 11, 12), should be well known to every reader of his Bible now. "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me," says the Lord, "hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life" (Jno. v. 24, *Gk.*). And the same chapter of Revelation shows that a thousand years before the great white throne those that belong to the first resurrection have found their blessed "part" with Christ, and reign with Him. This has been so often repeated, that I only refer to it in this place. Scripture never confounds, as many Christians do, the saint with the sinner with regard to judgment to come, nor the "resurrection of life" with the "resurrection of judgment" (John v. 29).

Yet there will be a judgment of works for the saint, though not a judgment *by* works; a review of things done in the body, and proportionate reward or loss, according as the works which "come into judgment" abide or cannot abide that solemn manifestation. Just in this way will the precious blood of Christ be manifested also, in all its saving power, for the believer. Nothing need be hidden, nothing shall be hidden: grace shall be seen in its full glory in the presence of the sins which have stained the best life ever lived among mere men. Reward that might have been may not be, but that which depends upon the work of Christ alone cannot be lost, if that work fail not.

All shall be manifested:—to ourselves how great a gain! when the story of our lives shall be fully told, and all God's ways with us seen in view of our own ways. Then to have the lives of others bared before us as our own lives, and to see the equal yet various dealings of God with all! The wisdom of all time,—the harvests of all seasons,—the full store garnered up of all that had seemed to be passed away,—who would lose such riches, that once knew their value? Nay, we shall never lose them: nothing passes, nothing is lost in all eternity; our memories will be as deathless as all else: how else could knowledge of redemption itself be left to us? or how could the praises of the redeemed go on without diminution?

The psalm does not go beyond time, the earth, and Israel; but the same principles are found in it: Gilead and Manasseh abide together. Divine love will put away their sins in such sort that the sunshine of God's favor towards them shall never know the shadow of a passing cloud; and yet the lessons of their past shall abide with them ever: the "heap of witness" shall do its blessed work. The psalmist's voice, representing that of the nation, claims both Gilead and Manasseh. The perfect memory of the one and the forgetfulness of the other,—learned both of Him who unites them in His necessary perfection—shall be found characterizing those who go back into the land to possess it according to the perfect grace of His covenant of promise.

This unites itself, moreover, with the present verse in a very striking way: for of what does "the valley of Succoth" speak, but of the *past*, as looked back upon from the full blessing reached? Succoth, the "booths," refers to the wilderness-

(iii.) the full inheritance.

"Moab is my wash-pot:
upon vEdom I cast my shoe:
wPhilistia, cry out because of me!

u Num. 24. 17, 18. Is. chps. 15 and 16. cf. 1 Cor. 5.

1-13 with 2 Cor. 7. 8-11. v 2 Sam. 8. 14; Obadiah; cf. 2 Cor. 10. 5 with Rom. 6. 6. w Jer. 47. 1-7; Zech. 9. 5-8; cf. Gal. 6. 12-16.

history which is for them now ended; and in these they lived, as it were, their life there over again. Their Succoths were, in short, a kind of Gilead for them.

"Ephraim also is the strength of my head," continues the speaker. "Fruitful" Ephraim, with her "myriads" of people, assured her by her prophet-lawgiver, would enable Israel to lift up the head. "As arrows in the hand of a mighty man," says one of the songs of degrees, "so are children of the youth: happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate." The blessings on the head of Joseph, enlarged upon both by Jacob and Moses, show how perfectly Ephraim fulfills the name.

But the spiritual meaning shines through here also, and will be realized when Israel, redeemed from the barrenness of her past history, shall bring forth fruit to God. The barrenness of the past has been a fruitful argument only on the lips of scoffers, as the apostle assures them, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you" (Rom. ii. 24): a principle of universal application to the barren professor. Conversely, the apostle brings forward the fruitfulness of divine grace in the soul to establish it, and to "assure our hearts before Him. For if our heart condemn us," he urges, "God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight" (1 John iii. 19-22). Thus every way "Ephraim is the strength of the head."

But "Judah is my ruler;" and this, too, carries us back to Jacob's blessing. The spirit of worship, of which Judah speaks, is that which alone gives God Himself His throne among men. How these psalms themselves, which the arrogant folly of a critic like Cheyne would deny to David, show this character—a praise which ever enthrones God! And this is what fits him for his own place on that *representative* throne, which was, as such, the "throne of Jehovah" (1 Chron. xxix. 23). Thus also the "Son of David" who is also David's Lord, is He whose voice is heard saying, "In the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee." In Him the two thrones come together in a perfect concord, never to be broken.

Israel is now in condition to receive, therefore, the full inheritance which she has never yet received. In her most triumphant days, Moab, Edom, the Philistines, lay within what was her territory according to the original promise. The first two, indeed, were expressly spared by their divine Leader, along with Ammon, the other son of Lot, and the lands they then possessed were retained to them. But this was only temporarily; for they never turned to God; and their judgment is denounced upon them by the prophets from Balaam on. "The residue of My people shall spoil them, and the remnant of My people shall possess them," says the Lord by Zephaniah (ii. 9).

Ammon is not mentioned here; but Moab, Edom, and Philistia, are; and, first of all, Moab: "Moab is my wash-pot."

When they were just upon the border of the land, at the time of their first entrance, Moab had been the guilty defiler of the people of God. Upon Midian, its ally in this, summary judgment had been executed, as we know; but Moab had escaped at that time.

"God," however, "requireth that which is past," and the deed of ancient times seems to come here into remembrance. There had, of course, been meanwhile no repentance. Israel, by summary judgment upon the seducer, washes herself clean at last.

In fact also, that which Moab seems to answer to passes away from Israel in judgment at this time. If Moab stands, as I doubt not, for mere profession (see

4 (9-12): Weakness waiting upon God. (i.) the strength to be met. (ii.) the breach that has existed. (iii.) shut up to God. (iv.) the experience looked for.

Who will bring me into the [z]strong city?
who will lead me into Edom?
Wilt not [y]thou, O God, who didst cast us off?
and didst [z]not go forth, O God, with our hosts?
Give us [a]help out of strait:
for [b]vain is help of man.
Through God we shall do [c]valiantly:
and *he* shall [d]tread down our oppressors.

x Ps. 31. 21. Ezek. 25.12-14.
y ver. 1. *cf.* Is. 63. 1-6.
z *cf.* Josh. 7. 11, 12. *cf.* Is. 59. 1-19.
a Ps. 44. 26.
b Ps. 146. 3. Is. 2. 22; Jer. 3. 23.
c Ps. 118. 15, 16.
d Ps. 44. 5; Zech. 10. 5.

Deut. ii. 8–23, *notes*), then we have the express statement of Isaiah to that effect. "And it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem, when the Lord shall have *washed away* the filth of the daughter of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning" (chap. iv. 3, 4).

How great a defilement indeed is the mere presence of unbelievers in the midst of the people of God! A wonder it is that, even in dead Sardis, a few should be found who had not defiled their garments (Rev. iii. 4). And the mere touch of death defiled in Israel. Familiar the word is, (but oh how it requires to be repeated in dull ears to-day!) "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? and what part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever? . . . wherefore come out from among them, and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father to you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. vi. 14–18.) Measure the defilement here by the penalty implied, and what must it be in the sight of God?

Israel is cleansed now in this respect, and of necessity growing into her inheritance. Edom must next give place. The casting the shoe upon it is the sign of taking forcible possession. Edom, the enemy-brother, yields and is displaced. Typically, the old man yields to the new. And with Edom conquered, Philistia bursts into a cry of pain. Typically, this is simple: for Philistia, as we have seen in constant and progressive pictures, (Gen. xx., xxvi., Josh. xiii., Judges ix., 1 Sam. xvii., 2 Sam. v. 17–25; xxi. 15–22: *notes*) is the religion of the flesh, which passes away with the "old man's" judgment. These things would take long to unfold in any proper manner, and scarcely need, for one who has learned the meaning of the scriptures just referred to. They will be found to give one consistent meaning throughout—consistent as truth ever is, and with this consistency on every side, as only truth can be.

That Israel is beginning to fill out her divine limits is plain in the letter of it; but this is only the anticipation of faith, as we see by the final section.

4. The sudden *drop* in the closing part, as a fourth section emphasized in its four verses, need not surprise us. Nor is it needlesss, this emphasis that is laid upon the human weakness which shuts us up to God for the accomplishment of every hope. It is the creature taking the creature-place, which is, after all, its perfection as such. God is *able* now on His side to come in and act for us.

All is very simple here. The strength of the enemy is first glanced at: Petra, the rock city of Edom, being pre-eminently strong. They must be *led* into it by One who has the key to its closed door. But He! alas for the breach that has come in there! Yet, this owned, will He not act for them, shut up to Him as they are, in the vanity of all other hope? Surely He will: when did *He* fail those whom all else had failed? Nay, out of this utter weakness comes our strength; and the apostle is here one with the poor remnant of Israel. Experience shall make good their confidence:—"Through God we shall do valiantly: for *He* shall tread down our oppressors."

With this, the assurance of faith is complete: the Michtam series of psalms ends.

SUBD. 3. (Ps. lxi.-lxxii.)

Christ the Restorer.

SECTION 1. (Ps. lxi.-lxviii.)

The Head of Blessing.

Ps. lxi.

[1]PSALM LXI.

The King's vows.

To the chief musician; upon a stringed instrument: [a psalm] of David.

1 (1-4): The King identifying Himself with the remnant.
(i.) His claim.
(ii.) rejected of the people.

HEAR my loud [e]cry, O God:
attend unto my prayer!
From the [f]end of the earth do I call unto thee when
my heart is [g]oppressed:
lead me to a [h]rock that is higher than I!

e Ps. 17. 1.
f *cf.* Ps. 42. 6 with Heb. 4. 15.
g Ps. 102, title. Ps. 142. 2,3. *cf.* Lam. 2. 11, 12, 19.
h Ps. 18. 2. Ps. 40. 2. *cf.* Ps. 42. 9.

SUBD. 3.

The third subdivision now returns to Christ as its theme, but to present Him in a very different way from the first. He is here the Restorer, as we see especially in the sixty-ninth psalm, which is in fact the trespass- or restitution-offering: He there restoring what He took not away. But from the very first psalm here we see Him identifying Himself with His people, taking up their lost cause, and ending with blessing for them of which men unfallen never could have dreamed. In the sixty-eighth psalm, which closes the first series here, He ascends up on high, leading captivity captive, and receiving gifts for men; and on earth, we find in the sixty-fifth, Immanuel fulfilling His Name, and the resulting blessing.

There are two sections in this subdivision: the first, of eight psalms, in which we have Christ as the Representative Head of His people, undertaking for them, and bringing them into the fruit of this: while the second shows once more, in the sixty-ninth, the Cross as the foundation of all for men; with, in the psalms following, Israel renewing her youth, and the glorious reign of her great King, which is the consummation of David's prayers, and of the promise to him. With this the book ends.

Sec. 1.

In the eight psalms of the first section we have the new covenant number; and they carry us fully into the new covenant blessing; while the Mediator of the New Covenant is seen throughout. Of the eight verses of the first psalm here the same thing may be said. It is the inspired introduction to it.

PSALM LXI.

In this, accordingly, we find the King's vows—vows taken up and fulfilled in place of Israel's, which have failed so utterly of fulfillment. The thirtieth chapter of Numbers will be found instructive as to this (see the notes). The title of the psalm has significantly here, *al neginah*, "upon a stringed instrument," instead of the usual plural, *al neginoth*. One Hand alone is upon the strings at this time. We may be assured, it is the hand of One who is a Master in harmony, amply sufficient to make all creation responsive. We have already heard Him say, "In the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee." And that this is in direct connection with His vow, both the twenty-second psalm (ver. 25) and the present one assure us: "So will I psalm unto Thy Name for aye: that I may daily perform my vows."

1. The identification of the King with His people is the explanation of the first part of the psalm. The voice is like that with which the book began, as being the cry of an outcast, "from the end of the earth," which may be "of the land," but is perhaps better given its whole depth of meaning. We find as we

(iii.) God the sanctuary.

(iv.) a Sojourner in the Tent.

2 (5-7): Answered with help.

(i.) the vows of the Head.

For thou hast been a [i]refuge for me:
a tower of strength from the face of the [j]enemy.
I will sojourn in thy [k]tent for ever:
I will take refuge in the [l]covert of thy wings.
Selah.

For thou, O God, hast heard my [m]vows:
thou hast given me the [n]possession of those that fear thy name.

i Ps. 62. 7, 8. *cf.* Joel 3. 16.
j Ps. 17. 9. *ctr.* Mt. 26. 53, 54. *cf.* Jno. 19. 10, 11.
k cf. Ps. 15. 1. *cf.* Is. 33. 20-22. *cf.* Rev. 21. 3.
l Ps. 17. 8; Ps. 63. 7; Ps. 91. 4; *ctr.* Matt. 23. 37.
m cf. Lev. 27. 1-33; *cf.* Num. 6. 2, etc.; *cf.* Num. 30. 1, etc.; Ps. 22. 25.
n cf. Is. 60. 21; *cf.* Is. 65. 8-10.

go on, that the voices are not the same; but the connection between them is full of significance. The Speaker here is pleading to be heard, to gain attention, to be led to a Rock that is higher than He. As the Representative of those whose case He has taken up, we can understand this, and we have heard Him thus crying out of lower depths than this. And immediately God is owned as His sanctuary-refuge, "a tower of strength from the face of the enemy." As one exposed to danger, He finds His shelter where man must ever find it, "under the covert of Thy wings."

When we realize the Person that is here, there is a remarkable and blessed word which He utters, which cannot be left unnoticed. "I will sojourn in Thy tent for ever," He says. The last word is *olamim*, "ages," but which is applied to the ages of eternity; and there can hardly be a doubt of its meaning in this case. The use of the plural form is, I think, as we may say, pictorial,—to make emphatic that measureless duration; all the more significant in contrast with the thought of a "tent" and "sojourner," in the same sentence.

But the tent is God's, and must contemplate that which He pitches among men, and which, though it be a "tent," in view of the glory of Him who dwells in it, does not necessarily imply any transience of the abode of the glory in it. For in relation to the new earth, and therefore the eternal state, we have in Revelation exactly the same expression: "The tent of God shall be with men, and He will tent among them" (chap. xxi. 3, *Gk.*): the thing said over twice, after the peculiar emphatic manner that we find in John, and which is the sweet divine assurance of what might seem for man too good to be true.

Thus God abides forever in a "tent," manifesting Himself in infinite condescension to His creatures in such a manner as that they shall know Him in the intimacy of perfect grace. This indeed the humanity of Christ already pledges to us. The Word made flesh could be no temporary condition, nor an isolated, however glorious, witness to the love of God. Rather must its witness be maintained and justified in all things being made conformable to it. The very throne is characterized thus as "the throne of God and the Lamb." The Lamb thus governs all; and the tent of God among men shows how this is to be realized, not simply by the saints in heaven, but by the inhabitants of earth also,—when once the banishment of sin from the earth shall make this possible.

But if this "tent" of God speak of final earthly blessing, how sweetly does the voice of Him who in this psalm is seen acquainted with the trials and sorrows of men, echo and confirm this grace! "I," He says, "will sojourn in Thy tent for ever": if Thou art pleased to have a tent, and sojournest, I too will be a sojourner; and not apart from this, but in the tent in which Thou sojournest, there will I sojourn! Blessed Lord, no wonder that when Thou wast born upon earth, the angels heralded Thee with "on earth peace, good pleasure in men"!

2. In the three verses following, which are thus the normal division of a seven, the eighth verse following not interfering with this, as we know, the same Speaker declares therefore the answer to His vows, in the "possession of those that fear God's Name" being given to Him. His vows are in behalf of these; He takes His place as their Head and Representative; and their blessing comes

(ii.) prolonged years.

Thou wilt °add days to the ᵖking's days:
his years [shall be] as [those of] ᵍsuccessive generations.*

(iii.) in the presence of God.

He shall ʳdwell in the presence of God for ever:
appoint loving-kindness and truth to ˢpreserve him.

3 (8): The vows fulfilled.

So will ᵗI psalm unto thy name for aye:
that I may daily ᵘperform my vows.

Ps. lxii.

²PSALM LXII.

God his dependence for deliverance from men, his enemies.

To the chief musician; to ᵛJeduthun: a psalm of David.

1 (1-2): God only,

(i.) as source of salvation.

(ii.) and assurance of the soul.

MY soul ʷwaiteth only upon God:
from him is my ˣsalvation.
He only is my ʸrock and my salvation:
[he is] my high place; I shall not be ᶻmuch moved.

o Ps. 21. 4.
p Ps. 20. 9. Ps. 21. 1, 7. Ps. 45. 1. Ps. 72. 1. Is. 32. 1.
q Ps. 45. 17. Ps. 72. 17. *cf.* 1 Tim. 1. 17.
r Ps. 16. 11. Ps. 23. 6.
s Ps. 16. 1. Ps. 40. 11.
t Ps. 21. 1. Ps. 22. 22.
u ver. 5.
v 1 Chr. 16. 39–42. Ps. 39, 77, titles.
w Ps. 40. 1. Ps. 69. 3.
x Ps. 21. 1, 5. Ps. 69. 29. *cf.* Lk. 22. 39–45.
y Ps. 61. 2, etc.
z *cf.* Mt. 26. 38, 39; *cf.* Jno. 12. 27; *cf.* Heb. 5. 7, 8.

* "Generation and generation."

through Him who has interposed for them. He openly takes accordingly the King's place, with days "added" to the "shortened days" (Ps. cii.) of a life that was for their sake "taken from the earth" (Acts viii. 33). The prophet Isaiah, of whose words this is the Septuagint version, beautifully supplements and explains these "added days," which at first have a strange look in connection with this glorious Person: "Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him: He hath put Him to grief: when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, *He shall prolong His days*, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand" (liii. 10). And these prolonged days are not to be simply the still limited days of a merely human life lengthened beyond the natural time: "His years shall be as those of successive generations." The peculiar words show how He still clings to men.

The next verse shows how the kingdoms of earth and of heaven, for so long separated, have come together. "He"—this blessed King—"shall dwell in the presence of God forever." No fear of a breach any more. And the latter part of the verse intimates that this is the voice of the people breaking in. Well may they, not doubtfully, but with the full accord of hearts filled with the prospect before them, cry: "Appoint loving-kindness and truth to preserve Him!"*

3. With the eighth verse the original voice takes up the word again, and the concord of different speakers has fitness and beauty. "So will I psalm unto Thy Name forever," He says: "that I may daily perform My vows."

For it is to glorify God in the face of sin and rebellion that He has come in, lifting up the fallen and sustaining in its place the new creation, with henceforth no failure. Thus His "vows," which began to be fulfilled in His life on earth, and then in His atoning death, shall still be performed by Him as the Leader of the unending praise that shall fill eternity. And there shall not be a dull note there: no heart but shall be tuned to full harmony with His. Blessed be God!

PSALM LXII.

The first psalm of the series has already brought us to the end of it; and this is the common way with Scripture introductions: the beginning has in it the

* The verse as it stands in the ordinary text has, however, some difficulty. A few Hebrew MSS. put *min* instead of *man*, but then the preposition cannot stand alone, and Coleman therefore proposes a different division of the letters of the two words that come together (originally written *without* division), and to read thus, "mercy and faithfulness *from Me* preserve Him." It would thus be the divine voice and not that of the people. The Septuagint reads again differently, and other alterations have been proposed.

2 (3, 4): Man in hostility.
(i.) united.

(ii.) deception.

How long will ye [a]assail a man?
—break him down, all of you,
as a [b]bowing wall, a tottering fence?
They only [c]consult to thrust him from his [d]elevation:
they delight in [e]lying:
with their mouth they [f]bless, and inwardly they curse. Selah.

3 (5-8): God the sanctuary-refuge.
(i.) God only,
(ii.) Saviour.
(iii.) refuge.

Only upon God [g]wait thou, my soul:
for my [h]expectation is from him.
He only is my rock and my salvation:
[he is] my high place; I shall not be moved.
With God is my salvation and my [i]glory:
the rock of my strength, my [j]refuge is in God:

a cf. Mt. 12. 14.
b cf. Ps. 41. 8. cf. Ps. 71. 10, 11.
c cf. Jno. 11. 53.
d cf. Mt. 22. 15-46. cf. Mt. 4. 1-11.
e Ps. 4. 2. cf. Mt. 26. 59, 60.
f cf. Ps. 28. 3. cf. Jer. 9. 8. cf. Mt. 22. 16. cf. Mt. 26. 49.
g vv. 1, 2.
h Ps 71. 5. cf. Lk. 23. 46 with 1 Pet. 1. 21.
i cf. Acts 3. 13.
j Ps. 16. 1.

final issue; the fruit is in that sense in the seed. God, who sees the end from the beginning, brings it out.

But here, therefore, we go back, and are in very different circumstances. We may infer from the general character of the series that the speaker is the same; but there is nothing apparently to indicate it. As a second psalm it is full of contrast, affirming his dependence on God alone, and the reason of this dependence; which makes him emphasize what man is, whose enmity he is experiencing. The psalm is thus very simple in character, and only bright in its confidence in God. It resembles in its lament over the vanity of man the thirty-ninth psalm, with which it is united by its title; here, however, not "to" but strictly "upon Jeduthun," (the praise-giver); though this is taken as the equivalent of the other. It is indeed one of those "songs in the night" which show God's mastery over the evil, and which yet men care so little to learn.

The psalm has twelve verses, which divide into four sections; but a verse is taken from each of the first two sections, and added to each of the last two, making the structure quite different from the usual one; the number three entirely dropping out. This, which must have a reason, I am not, however, able to explain.

1. The psalm begins with God, as the only expectation and confidence of the soul; and this is repeated and expanded in the third section. This is indeed the rock-bottom for a foundation; but how much sifting out of abundant sand is there, before we get down fully to it! Trust in Him we may have, and blessed it is to have it; but how long, in general, it takes to learn the power of this "only"! The dealings of God with us have to be therefore very much directed to this end, and how sorrowful are the experiences through which we are brought in this way! Yet we so willingly accept experience as our master, rather than the sure word of truth, which would lead us by a pleasanter and safer path!

2. The hostility of man is seen in the second section, as by and by it will be revealed when the restraint upon it is removed, in those dreadful days which the Jewish remnant will pass through, or as brought out by the Light of the world when in it. How the gospel of John especially reveals this murderous opposition,—the plottings and endeavors to cast Him down from His elevation, who was this Light, and whose personal glory only displayed the darkness of the world through which He passed. It is not changed at all, this world, although it may change its outside demeanor, the more thoroughly to deceive; and alas, our little faithfulness to a crucified Lord permits us an easier path through it.

3. From the contemplation of this the psalmist turns to realize the more his refuge and his joy in God. He re-affirms and expatiates on what God is to him, —what God only is. The words are so simple that they need no commentary: it is the heart-felt satisfaction in them that we may well all covet; and this, as he proceeds to testify, is for all, so that he invites all people to find it where he

(iv.) for all men.

Trust in him at [k]all times, ye people:
pour out your heart before him:
God is a refuge for [l]us. Selah.

4 (9-12) Man as tested.
(i.) all alike.

Surely [m]men of low degree* are breath,
and men of high degree* a lie:
they go up in the balances;
together they are [lighter] than [n]breath.

(ii.) trusts that deceive.

Trust not in [o]oppression;
and become not vain in robbery:
if [p]wealth increase, set not your heart [upon it].

(iii.) the divine oracle.

God hath [q]spoken once;
twice have I heard it:
that [r]power [belongeth] unto God.

(iv.) the test universal.

And unto thee, O Lord, [belongeth] [s]loving-kindness:
but thou [t]recompensest a man according to his work.

Ps. lxiii.

[3]PSALM LXIII.

Breathing after the Sanctuary.

A psalm of David, when he was in the [u] wilderness of Judah.

1 (1-4): God for His own sake.
(i.) God alone sought,

O GOD, thou art [v]my Mighty One;
[w]early do I seek thee:
my soul [x]thirsteth for thee,
my flesh pineth after thee,
in a [y]dry and thirsty, waterless land:—

* Literally, "Sons of Adam, sons of Ish."

k *cf.* Ps. 34.1. *cf.* Ps. 16. 8. *cf.* Jno. 8. 29.
l *cf.* Heb. 2. 10-13.
m Ps. 49. 2. Ps. 39. 5,11.
n Is. 2. 22. Jas. 4. 14.
o *cf.* Is.30.12. *cf.* Is. 33. 15-17.
p *ctr.* Ps. 52. 7. *cf.* Lk. 6. 20-25. 1 Tim. 6. 7-10, 17-19.
q *cf.* Ps.50.1.
r Ps. 59. 16. Ps. 66. 3.
s Ps. 61. 7. Dan. 9. 9.
t Is. 3. 11. Ezek. 33. 20. Rom. 2. 6-12.
u 1 Sam. 22. 5. 1 Sam. 23. 14, 15.
v *cf.* Jno. 20. 17.
w *cf.* Mk. 1. 35.
x *cf.* Ps. 42. 1, 2. *cf.* Jno. 4. 7, 34. *cf.* Jno. 14. 28.
y *cf.* Ex. 15. 22; *cf.* Ex. 17. 1-7.

has found it. How blessed to know, when we have reached this sanctuary-refuge, that the door is not closed behind us, and that we have now a gospel for all men, in the assurance that the door is open!

4. But this does not relieve the darkness as to man himself, and without respect to differences of which he makes so much. All alike are vanity—breath! emptier, when weighed in truthful balances, than the breath they spend so freely in their boasting and defiance of God. He addresses them,—he with his own sure confidence in God,—upon the vain trusts which deceive so utterly: power, which they use in tyrannic oppression; wealth, which enwraps the heart away from God. In his ears a divine oracle repeats itself, which, though it be so simple, faith after all alone it is that hears,—that power belongs to God alone; and that this God, so mighty, while to Him belongeth loving-kindness too, as has been already witnessed in the door of escape still open, will yet, in the day of judgment which approaches, give to every man according to his works. Thus the psalm closes: the song of the "praise-giver," like the song of Moses, levels all other confidence, to ascribe greatness and goodness to God alone.

Psalm LXIII.

It is entirely natural that, after this displacing of every false confidence, that God might have His true place as the whole rightful confidence of men, a psalm of the sanctuary should follow,—the breathing of the soul after God as this. "David in the wilderness of Judah" might well be the writer of such a psalm; but his circumstances could be but the occasion, and there is evidently contemplated a much greater King.

1. The first section shows us God as thus sought, the only and eager desire of the soul. He seeks early for Him, his soul thirsting, his flesh pining, in a dry,

(ii.) in repetition of past experience.
(iii.) the realization of the worshiper.
(iv.) going through the life.

As I beheld thee in the [z]sanctuary,
to see thy [a]power and thy glory.
Because thy [b]loving-kindness is better than life,
my lips shall [c]praise thee.
Thus will I bless thee [d]while I live:
I will lift up my hands in thy name.

2 (5-11): Confirmation of the trust on both sides.
(i.) sufficiency.
(ii.) bearing reflection.
(iii.) safe sheltered.
(iv.) in practical life.

As with marrow and fat my soul is [e]satisfied:
and my mouth shall praise thee with jubilant lips;
When I [f]remember thee upon my bed,
[and] meditate on thee in the night-watches.
Because thou hast been my [g]help,
in the shadow of thy [h]wings will I rejoice.
My soul [i]followeth hard after thee:
thy right hand [j]supporteth me.

(v.) the end of the enemy.

And those that [k]seek my soul to destroy [it]
shall go into the [l]depths of the earth.

(vi.) victory over them.

They shall be given over unto the power of the [m]sword:
they shall be a portion for [n]jackals.

(vii.) the consummation.

And the [o]king shall rejoice in God:
they shall glory, [p]every one that sweareth by him;
for the mouth of those that speak [q]falsehood shall be stopped.

z cf. Jno. 17. 5. *cf.* Phil. 2. 6. *cf.* Prov. 8. 22–31.
a 1 Chr. 29. 11. Rev. 5. 13. Ps. 145. 11.
b cf. Ps. 36. 7. Ps. 40. 10, 11. Ps. 69. 16.
c. Ps. 22. 22, 25.
d Ps. 145. 2. *cf.* Ps. 146. 2 with Rom. 6. 9.
e cf. Ps. 16. 5, 6. *cf.* Ps. 17. 15.
f cf. Ps. 16. 7. *cf.* Ps. 17. 3.
g Ps. 16. 8.
h Ps. 61. 3, 4.
i Ps. 16. 4, 5. *cf.* Heb. 12. 2.
j cf. Ps. 16. 8. Ps. 18. 35. Ps. 20. 6.
k cf. Ps. 22. 12, 13 with Mt. 26. 47.
l cf. Nu. 16. 30–32; Ps. 55. 15; *cf.* Rev. 19. 20.
m cf. Is. 11. 4 with Rev. 19. 15, 21.
n cf. Lk. 17. 34–37.
o Ps. 21. 1.
Ps. 45. 1; *ctr.* Is. 30. 33; *ctr.* Dan. 11. 36.
p cf. Deu. 6. 13; *cf.* Is. 65. 16.
q Ps. 101. 7, 8; *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 22; *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 10–12.

thirsty, waterless land. The epithets increasing in emphasis show the intensity of the conviction, how thoroughly the truth in the last psalm has been apprehended by the soul. He recalls what he had once seen of the divine power and glory in the sanctuary:—think here of Him who had left the glory which He had with the Father before the world was!—and he longs for this again, praising Him for loving-kindness better than life itself, a joy that makes God supreme in the heart that holds it. And this cup has in it no excess, while it never fails. A joy found in the unchanging nature of God, it shall endure because He endures: so that the heart can say, "Thus will I bless Thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in Thy Name."

2. The second section shows the double confirmation of this joyous confidence, in his own experience and in the end of his adversaries. For himself he can testify to perfect satisfaction of soul; which will bear reflection in those quiet hours when the shadows fall upon all other things, and one is apart from all influences that would hinder realization of the truth. Then in the consciousness of divine succor, the very darkness shall be like the shadow of sheltering wings: rest shall send forth with renewed energy in the track of the glory moving on before, and not without the support of the right hand of strength.

The same hand acts for him against all enemies. While seeking to destroy his life, they themselves go into the depths of the earth. We think of Korah and the great enemies of Christ, the beast and false prophet, gulfed in a living death; while their followers are slain with the sword as here, and left upon the battle-field to the jackals.

And then the King is seen in His victory. It is no mere triumph of strength, but of right and truth, the end of the unceasing warfare since the world began. It is the triumph of faith that has clung to and followed, amid suffering and apparent defeat, the bruised heel of the Captain of salvation. "They shall glory, every one that sweareth by Him" who is the living Truth: "for the mouth of those that speak falsehood shall be stopped."

Ps. lxiv.

[r]PSALM LXIV.

The vanity of evil-doers.

To the chief musician: a psalm of David.

1 (1-6): The wicked in power.
(i.) the cry of the righteous.

HEAR my voice, O God, in my plaint:
from the [s]terror of the enemy preserve my life.
Hide me from the [t]conspiracy of evil-doers:
from the tumultuous throng of the [u]workers of vanity.
(ii.) the allied wickedness.
Who whet their [v]tongues like a sword:
who aim their arrow—a [w]bitter word;
(iii.) "out of the heart."
That they may shoot in [x]secret at the perfect:
suddenly they shoot at him, and [y]fear not.
(iv.) the trial.
They [z]encourage themselves in an evil matter:
they calculate as to the hiding of [a]snares:
(v.) *their* exercise.
they ask [b]who shall see them.
They [c]search for iniquities:
(vi.) the limit.
we have perfected [they say] a carefully sought out [d]plan:
and the inward part of man and [his] heart is [e]deep.

r Ps. 61. 1.
s Ps. 91. 5. *cf.* Mt. 24. 8-13.
t Ps. 31. 13. Ps. 71. 10. *cf.* Dan. 6. 4-9.
u Ps. 5. 5. Ps. 53. 4. Mt. 7. 23.
v Ps. 11. 2. Ps. 57. 4. Jer. 9. 3.
w *cf.* Mt. 5. 11.
x Ps. 10. 8. Lam. 4. 18, 19.
y Ps. 36. 1, 4.
z *cf.* Jer. 26. 8-11. *cf.* Jno. 11. 47-53. *cf.* Jno. 16. 2.
a Ps. 62. 4.
b Ps. 10. 11, 13. Ps. 59. 7. Ps. 73. 11.
c *cf.* Mk. 14. 55-64.
d *cf.* Acts 13. 12-15.
e Is. 29. 15; Is. 30. 1.

Psalm LXIV.

The next psalm is a very characteristic fourth, the vanity of the creature being its theme: as shown, of course, in those who are away from Him, and who therefore are left to the experience of this. The common term for them, indeed, throughout the psalms, is that of "workers of vanity;" and so it is in this psalm. The close of it, which is in the judgment which so fully proves this, makes us think naturally of the last days; but the lesson is intended to be as general as possible, and therefore is given in terms according to this. There is nothing in the title which is distinctive. The ten verses exhibit the number that reminds us of responsibility and recompense, ideas which are, of course, main ones in the psalm; and these are divided into two portions of 6 and 4. as the ten commandments are into 4 and 6, in contrast with one another; the first showing us the wicked in power, the last his humiliation.

1. The first section begins with the cry of the righteous, alone, and suffering at the hands of men. These are they with whom we have seen the Lord identifying Himself in the sixty-first psalm, and thus their sorrows are brought before us here, their cry, as we have often seen before, bringing down the judgment at last upon their adversaries. Whether the Lord Himself is found in it, is, I think, very doubtful; the single expression (ver. 4) the "perfect" is surely used in too large and general a way to prove this; and the tone of the prayer seems distinctly lower than we could attribute to Him. But the world which is against His people is in this against Him, and their cause is fully His.

Wickedness of this kind loves company, and the presence of a multitude in sympathy favors sinning with a high hand. Even for the believer there is need for the exhortation, "Go not with a multitude to do evil:" for evil may be attenuated in our minds very much by the many with whom we share it. Wickedness is naturally cowardly, and loves to share its responsibility with others, even though it may scout the idea of responsibility; while faith walks singly, even amid a multitude. Conscience too is individual, and has a wide reputation for making men stiff and angular, and unfitted for much companionship. Yet a walk with God will be in company with those who walk with Him; but how many are they who unreservedly do this?

Among a multitude the tongue is a mighty instrument, and oratory deals with men's passions and loves emphasis. The "whetting of the tongue" is a thing

2 (7-10): Their humiliation. (i.) God against them. (ii.) themselv's against themselves. (iii.) God manifest in it. (iv.) shown in the ways of men.

But God [f]shooteth an arrow at them:
suddenly are they wounded.
And they are made to [g]stumble,—their [h]own tongue being against them:
they [i]flee away, all that see them.
And all men shall [j]fear and tell of the work of God,
and think wisely of his doing.
The righteous shall be [k]glad in Jehovah, and take [l]refuge in him:
and all the [m]upright in heart shall glory.

[f] Ps. 7. 12,13.
[g] Ps. 27. 2.
[h] Prov. 18. 7. *cf.* Lk. 19. 22.
[i] *cf.* Ps. 31. 11.
[j] *cf.* Acts 5. 11.
[k] Ps. 32. 10, 11. Ps. 58. 10.
[l] Ps. 9. 10.
[m] Ps. 33. 1.

perfectly familiar to those who affect the crowd. Yet the arrow flies too in secret, and the perfect is above all its mark. The voice of slander, which catches its inspiration from the first tempter, loves insinuation and suggestion, where open assault would be repelled and a specific charge might establish the integrity attacked. "Hath God said?" might be the voice of innocence itself.

Such arrows fly tentatively, need no justification, are not seen at their work till they have done it; hide their mischief even from one who scatters them, and no sting of conscience results. "*Say we not well*, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?" So "they shoot at him, and fear not."

Then they encourage themselves to further evil, and hide snares, as those who brought the adulterous woman to the Lord, or questioned Him about Cæsar's penny, as One who "taught the way of God in truth." Here the number of the verse, which speaks of exercise under the government of God, is surely in designed contrast with this nice calculation of successful devices, forgetful of any Eye upon them. The limit is reached in the next verse, where, after searching for iniquitous contrivances, their perfected plan is a consummation of unfailing villainy, in which are seen the awful depths that can be found in the human heart. But now God, who has waited till their scheme is perfected, is ready to interfere.

2. In a moment, as if with the rebound of their own arrow, they are struck by an unerring hand. And it is indeed, after all, the rebound of their own arrow: this is the righteous way of Divine government, as other psalms have presented it to us. Their deeds, their words, come back upon them. "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant," is true in many ways and spheres. God is glorified in this judgment: "all men fear and tell of the work of God, and think wisely of His work. The righteous are glad in Jehovah, and take refuge in Him, and all the upright in heart shall glory."

The day is coming in which these ways of God shall be open to the eyes of all. Meanwhile how dear unto Him beyond expression are the "patience and faith of the saints"!

Psalm LXV.

As to the general scope of this psalm, I quote from another, to whom I am constantly and largely indebted.*

"That this psalm," he says, "is the restoration of the Jews, or, more properly speaking, the replacing of the remnant (now a nation) in their old place with God, on the mediation of Immanuel, as introducing millennial blessedness, is, I think, evident. The Jewish portion of this is stated in verse 1, as expected and appointed, and that in the most beautiful manner possible, in the union, if one may so speak, of God's interest and man's in it, according to the promises. In

* The writer of the "Synopsis," so often referred to, in which, however, though more recent, he does not develop it after the same manner, the reference to Christ in it being omitted. There would seem, therefore, to have been some doubt in his mind as to it, after all, in later years; and in the paper from which this is taken, there is a tendency to apply many psalms directly to the Lord, in a way contrary to his after judgment. The present one, however, belongs to a series in large part Messianic; and I cannot but agree with the older interpretation. ("Heads of Psalms," in Collected Writings of J. N. Darby, Critical, Vol. I.)

Ps. lxv.

1 (1, 2): Zion the beginning of perpetual concord.
(i.) the vow the cause.
(ii.) the attachment.

[5]PSALM LXV.

Immanu-El.

To the chief musician: a psalm of David,—a song.

PRAISE [n]waiteth for thee, O God, in [o]Zion:
and unto thee shall the [p]vow be performed.
O thou that [q]hearest prayer!
unto thee shall [r]all flesh come.

n Ps. 62. 1.
o Ps. 48. 11. Ps. 97. 8. Is. 12. 6.
p *cf.* Ps. 61. 5, 8. *cf.* Nahum 1. 12–15 with Ps. 22. 25.
q Ps. 22. 24. Ps. 40. 1.
r Ps. 22. 27. Is. 49. 6.

verse 2 it is the Gentiles. In order to this, Christ must take it up; accordingly that which has prevented is stated in verse 3, but in Christ's Person, as for the Jews, (as in Isa. liii.)—the latter part being the expression of this by the Jewish remnant. This leads them to celebrate their acceptance in the Beloved, the Man whom God chose. Then comes the manner of their deliverance as in answer to their faith; the extent of this ('over all the earth') and the fruition of blessedness by the removal of the curse from the earth. Such is the scope of this beautiful psalm. The Psalms here open out more into the glorious results of the union of Immanuel with men."

If this be true, then "God with us"—Immanuel—may well be the title of the psalm: and this is in fullest accord with the place, numerically and otherwise, that it has in this series. Let us notice that, to the end of this now, the psalms are also "songs." Thank God, this for us will soon be the end also, that all the psalms shall be songs.

1. The first section is a very simple one. The praise of God from the whole earth, as the second verse shows it is, waits for Him in Zion. Millennial blessing has, as we well know, its beginning and its centre there. While Jerusalem is down-trodden and desolate, the earth cannot come into its rest. Zion is God's rest forever (Ps. cxxxii. 14), and there can be no rest, except as He rests: the principle is always true, whatever the apostle's application of it in the passage in question, that we enter into *His* rest (Heb. iv. 5, 11).

Zion is the place which, as we see from another psalm (lxxviii. 68), illustrates God's sovereignty in grace, when man has done all he could to produce utter ruin; and the apostle, in his comprehensive view (Heb. xii. 22) of the things which (by faith) we are "come to," places it thus, as the earthly centre, opposite to the New Jerusalem, the heavenly one. Zion itself means "fixed," and the first place in which it is mentioned (2 Sam. v. 7) is when David takes it out of the hand of the Gentile "treader down"—the Jebusite (see *notes*). It becomes then "the city of David," which, we rejoice to remember, means "Beloved," and it will be yet the city of the infinitely glorious One, when the time of Jerusalem's "treading-down" is over.

"Fixed" empire in the hands of the Beloved may well awaken praise to the ends of the earth. Man, alas, rejecting Him at His first coming, in behalf of Cæsar, has had proof of all kinds of Cæsarism ever since. And though it put on, as indeed at Rome itself it did, the forms of democracy, the character of rule is none the less apparent. How blessed now the fulfillment of the Oracle which the first David received, just as the sceptre was falling out of his well-proved to be incompetent hands! and which seems so fully to answer to the present psalm:—

"A righteous Ruler over men,
A ruler in the fear of God;—
Even as the morning-light when the sun ariseth,
A morning without clouds:
From the brightness after rain
The herb springeth from earth."

This is the inspired picture, and the psalm brings us manifestly to Him whose picture it is, in the latter part of the first verse, which would seem to make the whole utterance here His own. The first psalm of the series opened with the King's "vows," which we long before heard of in the twenty-second also, where

2 (3-5): The hindrance and the help. (i.) righteousness in grace. (ii.) the Beloved.

Iniquities have [s]prevailed against me:
our [t]revoltings, *thou* purgest them away.
Happy is he whom thou [u]choosest and makest to
[v]draw near,
to [w]dwell in thy courts!
we shall be [x]satisfied with the goodness of thy
house,—
thy [y]holy temple.

w cf. Heb. 10. 12; *cf.* Ps. 23. 6; *cf.* Ps. 16. 11. *x* Ps. 36. 8. *y* Ps. 15. 1.

s cf. Ps. 40. 12 with 2 Cor. 5.21. *t* Is. 53. 4-6. Mi. 7.18-20. *u cf.* Ps. 89. 3, 19. *cf.* Is. 42. 1. *cf.* 1 Pet. 2.6. *v cf.* Heb. 9. 24 with Heb. 10. 19-22.

there is but One possible to whom they could be ascribed. Vows they are on the part of One competent to utter, because competent to fulfill them; and whose lips could say, like His, "Unto Thee shall the vow be performed"? They are the lips of Him by whom God has found a dwelling-place among men such as He desires, a habitation amid the praises of a redeemed people, and a throne of grace upon earth,—the Mercy-seat sprinkled with His own precious blood. How intimately is this "vow" of His, then, connected with the praise which is to awaken on Zion and to the ends of the earth!

"The Desire of all nations" comes, the Answer to the unspoken wants of myriads that have never known the provision for them. Is HE not the heard prayer of the next verse, which brings "all flesh" to the sanctuary to worship? "I, if I be lifted up from the earth," He says, "will draw all men unto Me" (John xii. 32). Thus shall the vow be indeed fulfilled, and God in Christ be the joy of every one who has had divinely awakened in him the knowledge of his need. "O Thou that hearest prayer! unto Thee shall all flesh come."

2. But the second section comes now to confirm the first, by carrying us back from the glory now near to come, to show us the hindrance that stood in the way of the blessing, and how it has been removed. The structure of the next verse must not be hastily passed over, nor the changes which it exhibits be confounded with the varying speech of mere poetry. It is by slight notice, and confounding divine inspiration with mere human composition, that much of Scripture becomes necessarily closed to us, as the righteous penalty of unbelief. Notice, then, the change from singular to plural, and the emphatic "Thou" of the second part:—

"Iniquities have prevailed against Me!" cries the single Voice.

And many voices take up what may well be the answer: "Our revoltings, *Thou* purgest them away." Yes, this is surely the lesson of the Cross learnt at last: that which every sacrifice of the countless sacrifices in Israel pointed to and declared. "Purgation" is by blood-shedding: "without shedding of blood is no remission." And these "iniquities" which "prevail against" the innocent Sufferer are "*our* revoltings." That seeming disaster and defeat, the prevailing of *our* iniquities over Him, is but their purgation: "*Thou* purgest them away." How these two lines, then, show us at once in a divine way the hindrance and its removal, the faith also being manifest in them that works with repentance, in the acknowledgment of the sins and of the glorious Substitute! When Israel do this, then indeed the fountain will be opened to them for sin and for uncleanness, as Zechariah shows them (xii., xiii.). And now, therefore, their mouths are opened to declare the effect for them of Christ being their propitiation:—

"Happy is He whom Thou choosest and makest to draw near, to dwell in Thy courts! *We* shall be satisfied with the goodness of Thy house,—of Thy holy temple."

Here we have the same singular and plural as in the previous verse; the same partial disguise which we must be prepared for always in these mysteries of faith as they are given us, especially in the Psalms: a veil easily to be penetrated, if we only have our eyes open, and look carefully, that is, reverently, at what is before us. Put all that has gone before along with this,—let it speak as a whole;

(iii.) the realization.

[By] [z]terrible things in righteousness thou answerest us, O God of our salvation!
the [a]confidence of all the ends of the earth,
and of the [b]distances of the sea!

3 (6-8): God manifest.
(i.) stability for the earth.

Who by his strength [c]setteth fast the mountains,
being girded with power:
Who [d]stilleth the roar of the seas,—
the roar of their waves, and the tumult of the races.

(ii.) stilling of conflict.

And the dwellers in the ends [of the earth] [e]fear at thy tokens:
thou makest the outgoings of the morning and the evening [f]sing for joy.

(iii.) the inner work.

z Ps. 46. 8. *cf.* Is. 40. 2.
a Ps. 22. 27. Is. 45. 22.
b Is. 42. 4. Is. 51. 5.
c *cf.* Ps. 46. 2, 3. *cf.* Hab. 3. 6 with Ps. 30. 7. Is. 33. 6.
d Ps. 46. 10. Ps. 89. 9. *cf.* Ps. 93. 1–4.
e Ps. 22. 27. Ps. 72. 9.
f *cf.* Ps. 96. 9–13.

let the psalm find its place with the other psalms of the series; observe how the deeper meaning brings out a lustre, a glory, where otherwise there is what is comparatively commonplace; and you will realize that the Spirit that has inspired it all is the Spirit of Christ, and that you must get the point of view which is always His, to realize aright the inspiration.

"He whom Thou choosest" might by itself, of course, be that election of which every saved sinner is an example; and so, naturally, do most take it here. But who is it of whom God in Israel says: "Behold My Servant, whom I uphold, *Mine Elect*, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put My Spirit upon Him; He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles"? (Isa. xlii. 1.) God's "choice" is no less, although far differently, manifested, when Christ is spoken of as the Object of it, than when a poor sinner is taken up in divine sovereignty. In Christ it is all the fullness of His delight in that which is completely according to His mind and nature,—His Beloved, in whom He is well pleased. And thus the acceptance of any poor sinner is, as we are given to know, "in the Beloved."

"And makest to draw near" would thus imply His priestly access, which is the result of the acceptance of His work in behalf of others; and thus immediately the voice of His people is heard, the third person exchanged for the first, and the singular once more for the plural. "*We* shall be satisfied with the goodness of Thy house,—of Thy holy temple." This house will be Israel's grand distinction and privilege in millennial days.

There follows the intimation of how their acceptance is shown, the answer to their prayer in the day of their distress. "By terrible things in righteousness Thou answerest us, O God of our salvation." But then, for the earth also, the sun glints through the storm: "the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of the distances of the sea." Thus the effect of righteousness is quietness and assurance forever" (Isa. xxxii. 17); and we go on to see, in the earth delivered from the curse, the full blessedness of this.

3. The next three verses, therefore, go on to show us, not simply a sanctuary in restored Israel, but the earth, so long disfigured with the marks of sin and distance from Him, now pervaded with this glorious Presence. It is not, as we might at first think, the common testimony of nature to Him. It is the time of peace after conflict, when "His tokens" are seen in the very "ends of the earth," and acknowledged with reverent fear on the part of men. The condition of the earth is but the index of its new peace and reconciliation; as we see in the second verse here, where the stilling of the roar of the seas is connected with the stilling of the "tumult of the races." And so the Lord manifestly conuects things in looking at the tumult itself which is here referred to: "And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars, and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, *the sea and the waves roaring*" (Luke xxi. 25). Now they are stilled: the earth is brought into a stability as yet unknown; the mountains are set fast, human governments now being established by the power of God. He, coming out of the silence and stillness in which the

4 (9–13): The earth blessed.
(i.) the sufficient source.

Thou hast [g] visited the earth, to make it overflow:
thou greatly [h] enrichest it:
the [i] river of God is full of water:
thou preparest their [j] corn, when so thou hast prepared it:

(ii.) the earth prepared for increase.

Soaking its furrows, leveling its ridges,
thou makest it soft with [k] showers,
thou [l] blessest its growth.

(iii.) the heavens.

Thou hast [m] crowned the year with thy goodness;
and thy paths drop [n] fatness.

(iv.) the wilderness.

They drop upon the pastures of the [o] wilderness,
and the hills are girded with [p] gladness.

(v.) the final end.

The meadows are clothed with [q] flocks,
and the valleys covered over with corn:
they [r] shout for joy, yea, sing.

g Ps. 80. 14–19. Deut. 11.10–12.
h Ps. 67. 6. *cf.* Ezek. 34. 26, 27.
i Ps. 46. 4. *cf.* Ezek. 47. 1–12. *cf.* Zech. 14. 8.
j *cf.* Lev. 23. 39–44. *cf.* Ps. 4. 7.
k *cf.* Ps. 72. 6, 7. Zech. 10. 1. *cf.* Is. 55. 10–13.
l Is. 41. 18–20. *ctr.* Ps. 129. 5–8.
m *cf.* Deut. 16. 13–15; *cf.* Ps. 85. 1–3, 9–13; *cf.* Is. 27. 2–6. *n* Ps. 63. 5; *cf.* Jer. 31. 10–14. *o* Is. 35. 1, 2; *cf.* Is. 32. 15, 16. *p* Ps. 98. 8. *q* *cf.* Ps. 107. 41; *cf.* Is. 65. 8–10; *cf.* Ezek. 34. 20–25. *r* Ps. 96. 12, 13. Ps. 148. 7–14.

things of earth so often have seemed as if matters strange to Him, girds Himself now with power in which He is manifestly active. Faith may so see Him now, but can little justify itself to men at large. They talk of "laws" as if they were an iron fence around Him, and nature merciless. Now He comes forth from this obscurity, hushing the fury of men's passions, and quieting the earth that these have vexed. And men fear, in the uttermost parts of the earth, at His tokens: for a strange new gladness pervades all the changes of the day: morning and evening sing alike with joy!

4. The fourth section speaks more distinctly of the earth itself; the curse removed, its paradisaic beauty coming back to it; and all plainly at the touch of His hand to whom nature is still and ever perfectly obedient. It is God's visitation: Egypt's fertilizing flood, the type of that bountifulness by which its exhaustion is continually met and its strength renewed, is outdone by the ever full "river of God," which knows no failure, no stint at any time, and which awakens everything to life and activity. The "living"—not stagnant—water is always in nature truly the "water of life." It is what is needful for the activity of every organism, in every part. It is therefore the type of the Spirit in its cleansing, renewing energy, and that which does its transforming work in the land of Israel in the days to which we are looking forward (Ezek. xlvii.), and answers thus (though not in full measure) to that which laves with its glorious stream the New Jerusalem and the paradise of God (Rev. xxii.). From the sanctuary-throne they both flow, not like Egypt's river, from a distant, perhaps unknown, source. God, enthroned among an obedient people, is the spring of this blessing, deep, wide, perpetual: His necessary, bounteous ministry to creatures who "live and move and have their being in Himself."

Fully it is traced here to Him, the power working everywhere, first preparing the land, then preparing the corn. This is traced more minutely in the following verses: first, the influence upon the land itself (ver. 10); then the seasons of the year arranged with bountiful care (11); then the wilderness receives its bounty (12); and then we have the result everywhere in flocks and crops in which nature with its lavish beauty sings and rejoices (13). Ah, how we, with our sinful independence of God, have stopped this song in nature, and then proclaimed it lifeless, joyless, godless! It is never this; and the day is coming in which such divorce of God from His works shall be no more permitted,—shall be no more possible.

Psalm LXVI.

The sixth psalm of the series celebrates on the part of Israel the discipline of God, now effectual, in which the nations are to learn His holiness, themselves

Ps. lxvi.

[6]PSALM LXVI.

The Discipline of God.

To the chief musician: a song-psalm.

1 (1-7): The power of God.
(i.) common praise.

SHOUT aloud unto God, all the [s]earth!
Psalm the [t]glory of his Name:
make [u]glorious his praise.
Say unto God, How [v]terrible are thy works!
for the greatness of thy power do thine enemies [w]cringe before thee.

(ii.) testimony to His Name.
(iii.) the power realized.
(iv.) the whole earth subject.

[x]All the earth shall worship thee:
and they shall psalm to thee—shall psalm unto thy Name. Selah.

(v.) governmental dealings.

Come and see the [y]works of God!
terrible [has been] his doing towards the children of men.

(vi.) victory.

He turned the [z]sea into dry ground:
they went over the [a]river on foot:
there did we [b]rejoice in him.

(vii.) a reign of perfect power.

He [c]ruleth by his power for ever;
his eyes keep watch over the nations:
let not the [d]rebellious exalt themselves! Selah.

2 (8-12): Israel's testimony.
(i.) our God.

Bless [e]our God, ye [f]peoples!
and make the voice of his praise to be heard.

[s] Ps. 65. 13. Ps. 100. 1.
[t] Ps. 34. 3. Ps. 86. 9.
[u] Ex. 15. 11.
[v] Ps. 65. 5. Ps. 68. 35.
[w] Ps. 18. 44. *cf.* Ps. 81.15 with Zech. 14. 16–19.
[x] Ps. 65. 5, 8. Is. 49. 6.
[y] Ps. 46. 8. Ps. 86.8–10.
[z] Ex. 14. 21–31. Ps. 78. 13.
[a] Josh. 3. 9–17.
[b] Ex. 15. 1–21.
[c] Ps. 10. 16. Ps. 29. 10.
[d] Ps. 60. 12.
[e] Ps. 48. 14.
[f] Ps. 67. 5.

being brought to submission by the display of His terrible power. In the third part the voice of the King is heard proclaiming His thanksgiving vows as now to be performed; and in the fourth the result of His own trial, in which He (so different in this from all others) endured perfectly the test of perfect holiness.

1. The first section celebrates the power of God which has been put forth in terrible deeds on behalf of Israel. But, with Israel, it is the earth's deliverance, and the nations are exhorted to shout aloud to God for what He has done, and urged to bear witness to what He has shown Himself to be, in psalms. His terrible works are to be at least for them the display of irresistible power under which the stoutest enemies must humble themselves. Thus all the earth shall worship, even though by and by it may be found that not all of this is true. The Psalms do not go beyond the millennium, and therefore do not give the uprising at the end, which brings in final judgment, as the book of Revelation shows; but they do intimate in several places, as already in psalm xviii., the mere external subjection of many among the millennial nations. Israel alone is all holy (Isa. iv.), and their celebration of God comes in the last three verses. His terrible doings toward the children of men have been abundant mercy to themselves. His love to them has triumphed over all obstacles, and nature has owned the might of His presence with them, as the bed of the dried up sea has shown, and the "river": whether this be Jordan, as of old, or that which is more commonly and emphatically called the River—the other boundary of their land as it shall be—Euphrates (Rev. xvi. 12).

Power has been abundantly shown, then: He rules, and who shall dispossess Him? Omnipotence and omniscience are found together, with Him whose eyes without ceasing watch over the nations. Let not, then, the rebellious vainly exalt themselves!

2. But again the voice of Israel is heard, and this time to tell the story of their own trials, ended, at last, for them so joyfully. "Bless *our* God," they say, "ye peoples." They, at least, can own Him that, with a full heart: His laws

(ii.) His preservation.

(iii.) but purification.

(iv.) the trial.

(v.) governmental ways.

Who hath set our soul in [g]life;
and suffereth not our [h]feet to be moved.
For thou, O God, hast [i]proved us:
thou hast tried us as silver is tried.
Thou broughtest us into the [j]net:
thou laidest a heavy burden on our loins.
Thou [k]madest men ride over our heads:
we went through [l]fire and through water;
but thou [m]hast brought us out into abundance.

3 (13–15): The fulfillment of the King's vows.

(i.) burnt-offerings.

(ii.) of His humiliation.

(iii.) the fullness of praise.

I will go into thy house with [n]burnt-offerings:
I will perform my [o]vows to thee,
Which my lips uttered and my mouth spake
in my [p]strait.
I will offer up to thee burnt-offerings of fat beasts,
with incense of [q]rams;
I will offer [r]bullocks with [s]he-goats. Selah.

4 (16–20): The voice of His trial.

(i.) divine power in His behalf.

[t]Come, hear, and I will declare, all ye that [u]fear God,
what he hath done for my soul.

g Mal. 3. 6.
h Ps. 121. 3. Hab. 3. 19. *cf.* Ezek. 37. 22–28.
i Ps. 11. 4. Is. 48. 10.
j Lam. 1. 13. *cf.* Is. 51. 19, 20.
k Ps. 129. 1–4. Is. 51. 23.
l Zech. 13. 9. Is. 43. 1, 2.
m Ps. 85. 1–3. Ps. 126. 1–3. Is. 54. 2–10.
n Ps. 20. 3.
o Ps. 61. 5, 6. Ps. 56. 12.
p *cf.* Ps. 22. 1, 25.
q *cf.* Ex. 29. 19–28 with Eph. 2. 14.
r *cf.* Lev. 1. 3–9 with Eph. 5. 2.
s *cf.* Lev. 4. 22–26 with 2 Cor. 5. 21.
t Ps. 22. 22.
u Ps. 22. 23; Ps. 135. 20.

written upon their hearts, He has become their God in full reality, according to the terms of the new covenant. Thus they claim Him and speak of Him, declaring Him to the nations for their praise. He has, spite of all trials, brought them through, preserved their souls in life,—nay, more, perhaps, set them in what is really that. For "this is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." Such knowledge they now have, assuredly, and thus such life: although as doctrine the Old Testament could not formally develop it.

This "setting their souls in life" is that of which naturally their hearts are full, and thus too their feet find steadfastness. But the way by which they had been brought had been one painful to themselves, while the holiness of God had made it necessary. As silver God had assayed and purified them. Their foes had been made, all unwittingly, to serve them thus. Affliction had been to them, if a severe, yet an effectual teacher; and, the end accomplished, only gains were now to be counted: "we went through fire and water; but Thou broughtest us out into abundance."

3. But now the "we" changes for "I"; and we realize that it is another Speaker. "I will go into Thy house with burnt-offerings; I will pay Thee my vows, which my lips uttered and my mouth spake in my strait." It is not hard, surely, to recognize this Voice, which, immediately upon Israel's tale being told, takes up their praise to utter it before God, as the fulfillment of His own "vows." We know these vows, the King's vows: King of Israel, while much more. And dull must be the eyes that do not see whose are these burnt-offerings. The sweet savor of a perfect life presented to God in an infinite trial, in which the holiness of God searched out all the inward parts of such an One as had not His like among men, but whom, He who commanded the "sword" to "awake" against Him, declared at the same time His "fellow" (Zech. xiii. 7). Now we understand how Israel's praise itself is discerned as the perfume of this blessed work,—the fulfillment of His "vows": all the fullness of which is presently told out to us in familiar forms, as bullocks, rams, goats, specially connected with burnt-, trespass-, and sin-offerings. (Comp. Lev. i., iv., v., *notes.*) This is, in fact, what all our praise is,—what we ourselves are: *we* are but the fulfillment of *His* vows; all is but the fruit of His work. To owe our redeemed selves to Him shall be the fullness of our joy forever.

4. But now we are to have *His* testimony—how different from Israel's or that

(ii.) the spirit of service.
(iii.) the conditions of holiness.
(iv.) the test of experience.
(v.) the end.

Unto him I [v]called with my mouth:
and he was [w]extolled with my tongue.
If I [x]regarded vanity in my heart,
the Lord would not hear.
But God hath [y]heard:
he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.
[z]Blessed be God, who hath not turned away my prayer,
nor his [a]loving-kindness from me!

v Ps. 40. 1, 2.
w Ps. 22. 3.
x *cf.* Jno. 9. 31.
cf. Jno. 11. 41, 42.
y Ps. 18. 4–6. Ps. 116. 1. *cf.* Phil. 2. 9
z Ps. 40. 3.
a Ps. 69. 13.

Ps. lxvii.

[1]PSALM LXVII.

Complete blessing and rest.

To the chief musician; on stringed instruments. A psalm-song.

(i.) the source, grace, which in Israel —
(ii.) is a testimony of salvation to all.

GOD be gracious unto [b]us, and bless us,—
make his face to [c]shine upon us. Selah.
That thy way may be known upon [d]earth,
thy [e]salvation among all nations.

b Ps. 66. 8. *cf.* Rom. 11. 12, 15.
c Ps. 80. 3, 7, 19.
d Ps. 22. 27. Ps. 72. 11.
e Is. 49. 6.

of the redeemed at any time! He would have all those who fear God to listen, for the matter is of the deepest possible concern for every one. If Christ is for men, what more important than to know that God is for Christ!

The second verse seems to speak of the character of His service. God was His constant appeal and dependence; God was also the One exalted by Him. But, taking this place, the conditions of divine holiness had to be maintained, and in what circumstances, into which His zeal for God as well as His love to man had brought Him! If that fearful trial had brought out anything but sweet savor! Had there been aught of all that the Word stamps as being under the brand of "vanity" regarded in the heart! But the test was made, and the event has shown with what result. "In the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications unto Him that was able to save Him"—not "from," but—"*out of* death, He was heard," says the apostle, "*for His piety*" (Heb. v. 7). All hung upon what He personally was, and being what He was, who for the glory of God had come so low, "He could not be holden of death": "He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father." "Verily God *hath* heard Me: He hath attended to the voice of My prayer." Well may we join with the praise of Him who, freighted with all our blessings, set His feet on the rock of resurrection! "Blessed be God, who hath not turned away my prayer, nor His loving-kindness from Me!"

Thus the psalm is linked together in its various parts, and each of them throws light upon the other, until what at first seems ordinary and unattractive even, is lighted up with beauty. The world, Israel, Christ, the future and the past, are linked together; and He is seen to be the bond and soul of history, as well as the one link with blessing and with God, the Mediator between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus. Simple truths indeed, but they are light and life to us; and like the sun, which, for all its shining on the world so long, will be no less welcome when he shines to-morrow.

Psalm LXVII.

The sixty-seventh psalm is a bright and beautiful *seventh:* the number being emphasized as that of the verses also, of which the central one again, by its three lines instead of two, is marked out as the hinge upon which all turns, which is the reign of God upon earth. The grace of God flows through Israel, as the channel of it to the nations; they being the living example of it before the eyes of all. This the first two verses show: "God be gracious unto *us*"—His people Israel—"make His face to shine upon *us*, that Thy way may be known

(iii.) awaking praise from all.
(iv.) and for glad experience of creature blessedness.
(v.) Immanuel.
(vi.) curse removed.
(vii.)

[f] Peoples shall praise thee, O God:
all the peoples shall praise thee!
The races [of men] shall be glad and [g] sing for joy:
for thou shalt [h] judge the peoples righteously,
and the races upon earth, thou wilt [i] lead them.
Selah.
[j] Peoples shall praise thee, O God:
all the peoples shall praise thee!
The earth hath [k] yielded her increase:
God, [l] our God, doth bless us!
God shall bless us:
and all the [m] ends of the earth shall fear him.

[f] Ps. 66. 4. Ps. 72. 9-11.
[g] Ps. 100. 1.
[h] Ps. 96. 10-13.
[i] *cf.* Ps. 2. 8, 9.
[j] ver. 3.
[k] Ps. 65. 9-13.
[l] Ps. 66. 8.
[m] Ps. 72. 8.

upon earth, Thy salvation among all nations." There follows the prediction of praise from all the earth: "Peoples shall praise Thee, O God: *all* the peoples shall praise Thee." And then we have the subject-matter of their praise, the joyfulness of what it is, freed from the misery of self-will and from the wills of others, to serve God and be subject to Him.

This is true blessedness at any time. How strange that it should take so long to learn it; yea, that the world should have at last to be brought by judgment into subjection! But it is the proof which all history gives of the reality of the fall. Simple it is, that creature-blessedness is found just in *being* creatures,—in letting God be God. "Thou shalt judge the peoples righteously, and *lead* the races upon earth." How necessarily that last expression fixes our thoughts upon Shepherd care, and upon the "good Shepherd," in whose hands the sceptre is.

The next two verses are a good example of the fullness of meaning which the numerical structure brings out of the text. The fifth verse is but an exact repetition of the third, and its character as a third is evident. Praise belongs to the sanctuary; and in this verse there is nothing but praise. Yet precisely the same words come before us now as a fifth, and no possible division of the psalm could make *both* verses thirds. A fifth is most akin, by reason of its fundamental suggestion of "man with God"; and this can only be aright when God becomes enthroned in the heart, the object of his praise. Thus the fifth verse indicates that Immanu-el ("God with us") has become the real characteristic of the new condition of humanity, although this is only beginning and not perfected, in the millennium itself. But it is no longer to take a people *out* of the Gentiles that God is working, but to produce that condition which the new earth will see accomplished, when "the tabernacle of God shall be with men."

The sixth verse, as such, speaks of the limitation and control of evil; and evil may be, as we know, either moral or physical. The last is also a check upon the first—a means of restraint, of which we all are conscious. Now the previous verse has shown us, in the winning of man's heart to God, the power which has come in to bring about the eradication of physical evil. This therefore is now passing away: the earth is yielding her increase; the curse is removed from the ground;—the blessing of God is operative in antagonism to it.

The last verse gives the general result summed up: God is blessing Israel; all the ends of the earth shall fear Him now!

Psalm LXVIII.

The sixty-eighth psalm is characterized by its eighteenth verse; and this is authoritatively interpreted for us by the apostle (Eph. iv. 8), though there, with specific application to the Church alone. He does not therefore quote the last clause of it, which clearly refers to Israel: "yea, for the rebellious also, that Jah Elohim might dwell among them."

As the eighth and final psalm of this series, therefore, Israel is seen under the new Head of blessing, the ascended Christ, triumphant over all the power of the enemy, and, for this, over the sin which shuts men up in the great adversary's

Ps. lxviii.

[8]PSALM LXVIII.

Under the new Head.

To the chief musician: a psalm of David, a song.

1 (1-6): God before His people.
(i.) irresistible might.
(ii.) enemies destroyed.
(iii.) the praise of the righteous.
(iv.) the way of the desert-Rider.

LET God [n]arise, let his enemies be scattered!
let them also that hate him [o]flee before his face!
As [p]smoke is driven, thou shalt drive them away:
as [q]wax melteth before the fire, the wicked shall perish
from the presence of God,
But the [r]righteous shall be glad:
they shall exult before God,
yea, shall leap for joy.
[s]Sing unto God, psalm to his Name!
[t]cast up [the way] for him that rideth in the deserts:
Jah is his Name, and rejoice before him.

n Num. 10. 35. Ps. 132. 8.
o Is. 33. 3. ver. 12. *cf.* Is.41.15, 16.
p Hos. 13. 3. Dan. 2. 35.
q Judg. 5. 5. Mi. 1. 3, 4. Nah. 1. 5. Ps. 58. 7-9.
r Ps. 52. 6. Ps. 107. 42.
s Ps. 95. 1. Is. 12. 5. Zeph. 3. 14, 15.
t Is. 57. 14. Is. 62. 10. Is. 40. 3-5.

hand. Under Christ, therefore, Israel fulfills all her by-gone promises of glory; for here is the One to whom all these point. All the wealth of the divine names is poured into the song, for their meaning is now justified and made good. "All that is most glorious in the literature of the earlier period," says Delitzsch, "is concentrated in it: Moses' memorable words, Moses' blessing, the prophesies of Balaam, Deuteronomy, the song of Hannah, re-echo here. But over and above all this, the language is so bold and so peculiarly its own, that we meet with no less than thirteen words that do not occur anywhere else." These various connections, which seem to have led expositors away in different directions, are intelligible when we recognize their relation to Israel's inheritance in Christ, to which they all look forward.

1. The psalm begins with Moses' invocation in the wilderness, when the ark set forward (Num. x. 35), *Elohim* (God) being substituted for Jehovah. In fact Israel is beginning again her triumphant progress under her divine Leader of ancient times. We go back of all her history in the land, which has been but failure, to see her now on the path of steady advance, all the causes of error and failure being removed, and a new covenant replacing the old, disastrous one, which in their wilfulness they had chosen.

Their enemies are now "the wicked," the enemies of God. It is the conflict between good and evil that is approaching its crisis. The labor of ages to end it, so long ineffectual, will now be compressed into one sharp, decisive encounter. Like wax before the fire, the foes shall melt away before the presence of God. But the righteous shall be glad and exult, yea, leap for joy.

God is now seen as beginning His triumphant march, and as in Jehoshaphat's successful war, the singers go in the forefront of the host. They are to cast up the way before the advancing King. This, of course, is spiritual preparation, and connected in Isaiah (lvii. 14; lxii. 10) with the removal of stumbling-blocks. The spirit of praise is the spirit of power. The joy of what God is, is holiness itself, the atmosphere of heaven, that which will allow nothing contrary to the character of Him whom it proclaims by His Name Jah, the One who is,—the great Reality, for faith (though not in the pantheistic sense) the One Existence. Ah, if God only were all to us after that manner, as in that scene to which the knowledge of the new man introduces, (as the apostle tells us,) "Christ is all"—how would such joyous faith prepare God's glorious way!

The way of Him "that rideth in the *deserts*," says the psalmist; and the number here accentuates this. It is not, however, the common word for the wilderness, but that which is the specific name for the deep groove from the lake of Galilee to the Red Sea, in which the Jordan runs down to the Salt Sea, and in

(v.) governmental ways.

(vi.) His hand upon evil.

2 (7-12): Relationship according to the legal covenant.

(i.) God at the head.

(ii.) the witness of nature.

(iii.) divine refreshment.

(iv.) the experience of the poor.

A [u]father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows
is God in his holy habitation.
God setteth the [v]solitary in families:
he bringeth out the [w]prisoners into prosperity;
but the [x]rebellious dwell in a dry land.

O God, when thou [y]wentest forth before thy people,—
when thou movedst through the waste,— Selah—
The earth [z]quaked, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God,—
yon Sinai, at the presence of God, the God of Israel.
Thou didst send a plentiful [a]rain, O God, on thy heritage,
and strengthenedst it when it was [b]weary.
Thy community dwelt therein:
thou preparedst in thy goodness for the [c]poor, O God.

u Ps. 146. 9. Hos. 14. 3. Is. 54. 5.
v 1 Sam. 2. 5. Ps. 113. 9. Is. 54. 1-8. Is. 49. 14-23.
w Ps. 107. 10-14. *cf.* Is. 42. 6, 7 with Mt. 5. 25, 26.
x Is. 30. 8-17. Ezek. 2. 3-8.
y Is. 52. 12. Hab. 3. 10, 13.
z Judg. 5. 4, 5. Ps. 114. Job 9. 5, 6. *cf.* Hag. 2. 6, 7.
a Deu. 11. 11, 12. 1 Kl. 18. 41-45; *cf.* Is. 55. 10-13; *cf.* Ps. 72. 6.
b *cf.* Jer. 31. 23-26; *cf.* Hos. 6. 3.
c Ps. 72. 2, 4, 12-14; *cf.* Zeph. 3. 12, 13.

which the Sea itself lies,—the Arabah: here in the plural, which may stand for the different parts of one depression, or for all that is similar to this. The word means a "parched, dry place," which in its specific application, Jordan, the river of death, and the salt sea, the lake of fire and brimstone, sufficiently characterize. Death is in itself the stamp of man's condition, his removal from the place which through sin he has forfeited, and thus, if there be no remedy, from the face of God. But it is when he is brought to the realization of this, into the dry, parched place, he finds One that moves there, sovereign over what may seem insurmountable difficulties. It is here the work of Christ manifests itself in all its glorious power; and it is suited therefore to a psalm which brings Israel into blessing under the new Head, Christ, that Jehovah should be revealed as "He who rideth in the Araboth,"—who moves serenely in the plenitude of power among these places where human resources are dried up. Fitting too is it that just in this connection the reminder of death should be found accompanied by the assurance of His tenderness and resources for those who suffer from this:—"a Father of the fatherless, and a Judge of the widows, is God in His holy habitation." And similar things are those that follow also: "He setteth the solitary in families,"—removing the curse of barrenness and the sorrow of isolation. Again, "He bringeth out the prisoners," not into liberty merely, but "into prosperity": while "the rebellious" only, but they assuredly, "dwell in a dry land" still. Thus His character both in grace and in righteousness is declared.

2. In the last word we have reached the only cause of the failure of Israel's bud of promise so long ago; and this recalls the psalmist to their history already referred to. There was then on God's part assuredly no lack of power; nor of testimony to it was there any lack: "O God, when Thou wentest forth before Thy people,—when thou movedst through the waste,"—not *Arabah* now, but *jeshimon*, "desolation, waste,"—"the earth quaked, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God; yon Sinai at the presence of God, the God of Israel." They had had the fullest assurance of Who was with them. It was God, and their own God, to whom nature had done homage. Sinai had witnessed the wonderful covenant established between God and His creatures. In the fulfillment of it He had carried them into the land, and showered His gifts upon them in what was His inheritance, but in which He settled them. There they dwelt as His community,* Himself to be their life-bond, and preparing thus in His bounty

* *Chajah*, "living thing"; but used also for a "company" resembling a living organism, and thus even for a "troop" of soldiers.

(v.) man with God.
(vi.) victory.
3 (13–19): Sanctification for the sanctuary.
(i.) grace the source.

The Lord giveth the word:
the [d] women that publish the good news are a great host.
Kings of [e] armies are fleeing—fleeing:
and she that stayeth at home [f] divideth the spoil.

Though ye [g] lie between the hurdles,
the [h] wings of a dove [are there]:
covered with [i] silver,
and her feathers with green-tinted [j] gold.

d *cf.* Ex. 15. 20. *cf.* Judg. 11. 34. *cf.* 1 Sam. 18. 6.
e Ps. 48. 4, 5. *cf.* Zech. 14. 2, 3.
f *cf.* 1 Sam. 30. 24. *cf.* Is. 33. 22–24.
g *cf.* Gen. 49. 14, 15. *cf.* Judg. 5. 16.
h *cf.* Ps. 17. 8; *cf.* Ps. 63. 7.
i *cf.* 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19.
j *cf.* Is. 60. 7–9.

for a people dependent, in their poverty, upon Him. This characterized His dealings with them ever, while they remained indeed His community and only kept the place of dependence. Were there enemies to be encountered, His word was the effectual routing of the enemy: there were needed, then, only women to spread the glad tidings of the victory. Kings with their hosts were at once in flight; and women—the quiet stayers at home—were sufficient to take the spoil. Such was Israel when with God; and such had been the goodness of God to Israel.

3. The words change now into a direct address to the people. But the passage is so difficult, largely from its elliptical character, and it is yet so important to be clear about it, that I shall examine it at more than usual length. It is a good example of the difficulties which sometimes beset both the interpreter and the translator, as well as of the only way in which they can be satisfactorily settled, that is, by Scripture itself, one part being explained by another, as a divine and necessarily self-consistent whole.

The rapidity of transition is very characteristic of the Psalms, and indeed of the prophets generally. From the third person in the preceding verses, we come here to a direct address in the plural, which is exchanged for the third person singular in the following one, and this once more in the second verse after it, for a direct appeal again, but in an entirely different quarter. The elliptical construction is, however, the great difficulty, as already said. "Though ye lie between the hurdles . . . wings of a dove, covered with silver," etc. There is no verb to the latter part, and no "as," as in the common version. Whatever is put in, as something must be, partakes necessarily of the nature of interpretation.

Then one of the words is doubtful, *shephattaim*, which only occurs again exactly in this form in Ezek. xl. 43, where the common version suggests variously "hooks, end-irons, hearth-stones." and the margin of the Revised has "ledges." But that passage is more difficult than the one before us. In the present one there has also been suggested "hearth-stones," in the common version "pots," by others "borders," but by most now, with the Revised, "sheep-folds," or better "hurdles," pens or stalls for cattle. The word is from a verb, "to place," and as a dual form has as its primary idea two things placed over against one another (*Wilson*). The reference seems to be to Gen. xlix. 14 and Judges v. 16, where a word only slightly different in form is used (*mishpethaim*), and which is generally agreed to mean "hurdles" or "sheep-folds;" and we shall presently find this confirmed by comparison of the passages.

But what must we supply in the gap which follows this? In the common version the "as" is as hypothetical as is the "yet shall ye be"; and one naturally asks, why should Israel be compared to the "*wings*" of a dove? what special force has "wings" there? It is said, for their special beauty; and Cheyne quotes Miss Whately's description: "Seen in the bright glow of the sun's slanting rays, the outspread wings of a dove might fitly be described as 'yellow gold'; then, when the bird has wheeled round, and is seen against the light, they might as fitly be called 'molten silver.'" But though this is satisfactory enough, yet there seems more needed for any proper explanation. The wing

(ii.) twofold salvation.

(iii.) the sanctuary.

When the Almighty [k]scattereth kings on her account,
thou makest [as it were] snow in Zalmon.
The mount of God, is it mount [l]Bashan?
a mount of peaks, mount Bashan?

[k] ver. 1. Ezek. 39.1-7.
[l] *cf.* Nah. 1. 4, 5. *cf.* Zech. 11. 2.

implies, one would say, action in some way, and the color of the wing can hardly be the whole matter.

The gap is best supplied also in its simplest form, though we can hardly read as simply as Moll, "The wings of a dove *are* covered," which (besides joining together a plural and a singular in a questionable manner) disconnects this too much from what precedes it, even though that be put in the form of a question: "would you lie between hurdles?" itself unsatisfactory when we consider, as we must now do, the significance of the passage as a whole.

Looking on but a verse or two, we see that we are coming to the thought of the sanctuary which God has chosen for Himself in Zion, and then to see Israel (in the characteristic verse of the psalm) under the new Head, Christ, ascended on high. Looking back, we have seen them under the covenant at Sinai, a covenant which had so conspicuously failed in securing blessing for them. How, then, shall they now be blessed? The answer to this is evident: it can only be by the work of Christ, by redemption and the work of the Spirit in them. We must look therefore for some reference to this at the point at which we have now arrived.

The connection of the opening words with similar expressions in Genesis and Judges has been already referred to. In the latter case Deborah describes the listless indifference of Reuben to the common welfare, when Zebulon and Naphtali were periling their lives in the field against Jabin, king of Canaan. "Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks?" she asks. It might be more literally rendered, "Why sattest thou between the hurdles?" It is the expression of indolent self-seeking which kept them amid the abundant pasturage of their grassy plains. In Genesis, it is Issachar that is spoken of, and the words come still nearer to what is in the psalm before us: "Issachar is a bony ass, lying down between two hurdles: and he saw that rest was good, and that the land was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant for tribute." Here indolent self-seeking is complete, even though it may miss its end, as so often it does. And in Jacob's prophecy (as we have seen when examining it) the separate tribes represent conditions of the nation, whose remarkable history is pictured in it from the beginning, through the present time, and on into the future to which our psalm also carries us. The nation is before us in both cases, and in the same condition. Hence the application here must be what it is there, or would naturally be so. Issachar shows us the process by which the people of Jehovah became the poor drudge of the Gentiles; and here they are beheld in the same spiritual condition, listless, subject, degraded; in the opposite state to that of blessing, and to that which their own prophecies assure us shall be.

But this is just where grace finds every one of us,—where they too will be found; and therefore we need not wonder at the sudden change which is now indicated as taking place. And here the dove becomes a very striking figure.

The dove is a common figure in the Song of songs, and there doubtless represents Israel. We shall not forget this, while yet we remember that its first and fundamental significance carries us away from this, although there is an easy connection between the different applications.

It is plainly in the New Testament the symbol of the Spirit of God: "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove," says the Baptist, "and it abode upon Him." This necessarily, therefore, is an application which every one accepts; but even in this place it suggests another: the dove, the bird of heaven, the bird which is at once realized as the bird of love and as the bird of sorrow, and which Scripture speaks of in this double character, is so manifestly the representative of Christ Himself, the Man of sorrows, (sorrows that flowed from

(iv.) the failure of the world.

Why look ye askance, ye mountain-peaks?
[on] the mount God hath [m]desired for his abode?
yea, Jehovah will dwell perpetually [there].

[m] Ps. 78. 67-69. Ps. 87. 1, 2. Ps. 132. 14.

love, and into which love brought Him down,) that this application is no less evident than the other. Necessarily the symbol is thus a double one: for the dove could only come and abide on Him because here was a congenial home; and conversely, the Spirit of Christ must characterize Christ.

But Scripture confirms this further and without possibility of doubt, in that the dove is (in its two varieties of dove and pigeon) the only specified *sacrificial* bird. In this way it could, of course, apply, not even to the Spirit of God, but only to the Lord. How at once, then, there gleams upon us the glory of its matchless "wings"! Here the application to Israel even in the psalm before us seems at once excluded. What would be the force of any such to them? But if to Christ, then they may well be emphasized,—"wings" that brought a Saviour down! And all is plain: the wings covered with *silver*, reminding us of the redemption-money; and that presented first; then, as the light strikes differently, the glory of the "green-tinted gold,"—divine glory, with the hue of reviving nature in it, as in the "rainbow like an emerald, round about the throne" (Rev. iv. 3).

Thus Israel is most unlike these wings of a dove, while they speak of Christ with the clearest evidence. But how then do they come in here? The answer is surely not far to seek. "In the shadow of Thy wings I will take refuge;" "I will trust in the covert of Thy wings;" "in the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice:" are expressions which we have had in the Psalms elsewhere: what difficulty, then, in seeing Israel here under such covert? And from the New Testament comes one sweet, pathetic word which clasps this from the other side: "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

They are rejecting no longer now, and the wings of redeeming love are over them. The effect is seen in the following verse, though difficulties are still found in the language. Most translators have: "when the Almighty scattered kings *in it*"—meaning the land; but that is surely too far off the reference. "On her account" is abrupt, if referring to the people; but in any case there is a change to the third person. Why not, however, a reference to the dove just mentioned? which would account, moreover, for the impersonal form of the next line: "Thou makest as it were snow in Zalmon," or else, perhaps, "there was as it were." The language, if not the mere history some would make it, must be quite boldly figurative. If it be prophecy of a distant future, then we need not wonder if it be enigmatic. But there is, as we are reading it, consistent meaning, and one worthy of a divine oracle. If it be, on the other hand, merely the defeat long ago of no one knows who, at a place disputed about, then it is hardly worth while to concern ourselves about it.

The truth is, no doubt, that here we have Israel's twofold salvation: from the nations which will be gathered against her when deliverance comes; and this as a sign of a more perfect deliverance which will make her shine out of the darkness which has fallen upon her as snow upon the sides of a "shadowed" mountain.* If this scattering of kings be taken as on her (Israel's) account, there is a very suitable sense in this; if it be on account of the "dove" under whose wings Israel has found refuge, then the sense is one more manifestly evangelic and beautiful. The most commonplace meaning is *not*, let us be assured, when Scripture is concerned, the best or truest: it is far otherwise; for "the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (1 Cor. ii. 10.)

When now the hindrances have been removed, God is free to give full expression to His love; and, as of old He dwelt among the people brought out of Egypt, now that redemption has done its full and final work, immediately we

* *Zalmon* means "shady,"

(v.) Adonai enthroned.

The [n]chariots of God are twenty thousand,
thousands upon thousands:
the Lord is among them, [as in] Sinai, in the sanctuary.

(vi.) the victory which sets aside evil.

Thou hast [o]ascended on high,
thou hast led captivity captive,
thou hast received gifts on account of man;
yea, even the [p]rebellious,
that Jah Elohim might [q]dwell [among them].

(vii.)

[r]Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us [with benefits],
the Mighty One, our salvation. Selah.

4 (20-23): The prostration of the enemies.
(i.) the Mighty.

He that is our Mighty One is mighty for [s]salvation:
and unto Jehovah the Lord [belong] the [t]issues from death.

n Deu. 33. 2. Dan. 7. 10. 2 Ki. 6. 16, 17. *cf.* Rev. 19. 11-21.
o Eph. 4. 8-10. Ps. 110. 1. *cf.* Acts 9. 4-6, 13-16.
p *cf.* Ezek. 2. 3-8 with Ezek. 44. 6-8.
q Is. 65. 2-10. Zech. 2. 10. Zech. 8. 3 Ezek. 48. 35.
r Ps. 72. 18, 19. Ps. 103. 1-5.
s Ps. 3. 8. Jer. 3. 21-23. Jonah 2. 9.
t Deu. 32. 39; *cf.* Ps. 116. 3-9; *cf.* Ezek. 37. 11-14.

hear of His sanctuary. But where is it to be? Not in the mountain-range of Bashan, with its imposing and basaltic peaks, or in any similar heights. The mountains of Bashan, towering up from its level plains, might well suit and symbolize power as it is held by the great ones of earth who lord it over their fellows; but not such is Zion, a mount indeed, but most accessible, raising up men, His worshipers, to the level of His own desires, where condescending grace could meet them. There His desire has brought Him, and there He will abide.

There, too, the chariots of God are round about Him, the living forces which from the centre of His glorious presence go forth to all the earth. Angelic power thus manifested itself at Sinai, though there, necessarily, in a hidden sanctuary, where earthquake and fire shut Him in. Zion is the opposite of this, with all its glory but no fringe of fire. And Sinai was but temporary, for a purpose; Zion is His eternal rest.

But we penetrate closer, and into the presence of this glorious King. He has descended: blessed be His Name, He has descended; that is evident; but "He who hath [now again] descended is the Same also that ascended up." The voice of praise breaks out, but which is but the confession of what He has accomplished: "Thou hast ascended on high; Thou hast led captivity captive; Thou hast received gifts on account of man: yea, even for the rebellious, that Jah Elohim might dwell among them."

Here then the glory of Christ is fully displayed. He it is who having first come down into the lower parts of the earth, "ascended up, far above all heavens, that He might fill all things." Here is the tender sympathy of One who has been in every possible human position, and even under the weight of sin itself, that He might be near us, with us. The frowning sublimity of Bashan or Sinai would not indeed suit such an One, but only the "mount Zion which He loved."

Victor in the necessary conflict between good and evil, He has led captivity captive—put an end, that is, to the tyranny of Satan, and released those under his power. But it is not enough for Him to set free: He must enrich these, but now the poor slaves of Satan. He has "received gifts on account of man:"—which the apostle carries on to its result, "gave gifts unto men." He applies it to the Church; the psalmist goes on to speak of Israel: "yea, for the rebellious also, that Jah Elohim might dwell among them."

This part ends here with an ascription of praise: "Blessed be the Lord who daily loadeth us with benefits: the Mighty One, our salvation."

4. There are now to the end of the psalm four brief sections of four verses each. The present one shows us now the prostration of the world, out of which God

(ii.) destruction of the enemies.

But God will smite through the head of his enemies,—
the hoary scalp of one that [u]goeth on in his trespasses.

(iii.) restoration.

The Lord said, I will [v]bring again from Bashan:
I will bring again from the depths of the sea.

(iv.) utter prostration.

That thou mayest dip thy [w]foot in blood;
that the tongue of thy dogs may have its portion from [thine] enemies.

5 (24-27): Israel with God.

(i.) the Divine King.

They have seen thy [x]goings, O God:
the goings of my Mighty One, my King, into the [y]sanctuary.

(ii.) testimony in communion.

The [z]singers went before;
the players on stringed instruments afterward,
in the midst of the [a]maidens playing with timbrels.

(iii.) Israel's heart in overflow.

In the [b]congregations, bless ye God:
the Lord, from the fountain of Israel!

u Prov. 29.1. cf. Lk. 19. 14. 27.
v Ps. 85. 1,2. cf. Is. 49.22. cf. Jer. 30. 18. cf. Joel 3. 1, 2.
w Ps. 58. 10. Ps. 149.6-9.
x cf. Ex. 13. 21. cf. Ex. 14. 19.
y Ps. 24. 7-10. Ps. 77. 13.
z cf. 2 Chr. 20. 16-22. cf. 1 Chron. 15. 16-28.
a cf. Ex 15. 20.
b Ps. 22. 22. cf. Ps. 74. 2.

delivers his people. Israel's Mighty One has been shown Mighty for salvation; and as to death itself, the issues from it are His. Destruction must be the portion of His enemies, who persistently, spite of His warnings and His mercy, pursue their evil way. The Lord has said He would bring again His people from Bashan, which has just been used as a figure of the world; yea, if it were from the abysses of the sea: and that to see the utter prostration of their foes, left as carcases upon the battle-field.

5. We go on to a very different scene. Israel is now with God, at the end of all her sorrows, in a union never to be broken; and as the ark of old was ushered into its sanctuary-rest amid rejoicing of the people, so now is the divine King Himself welcomed with the heartfelt praises of the delivered nation. The psalmist paints it as an actual scene before his eyes: "They have seen Thy goings, O God,"—a plural, which takes in the movement of the whole joyous crowd, and so Delitzsch renders it "procession,"—"the goings of my mighty One, my King, into* the sanctuary." This is the very point of what is here, that God is taking His place in the old (and yet how much more than the old!) relationship to His people; and this God is He who is also Man, the glorious King, long since come in humiliation, only to be rejected.

The singers come at the head of the procession. The human voice leads all instruments. This, though but what we recognize as natural, and may overlook because we are so familiar with it, contains a precious and yet solemn truth, that man's heart must be turned Godward before nature will give her true responsive praise; and then, too, his hand must be upon the instrument, as we have often seen. Here, too, we find the maidens with their passionate emotion, soul going with spirit in the glorious outburst of harmonious rapture. Well may the virgins celebrate the Virgin's Son!

They incite each other to praise, now! How often have they incited one another to sin and to rebellion! But henceforth in Israel human association will be found and prized at its true value. They shall have no need to say to one another, "Know the Lord"; for all shall know Him, from the least unto the greatest. There shall be no "counsel of the ungodly" by which to "walk," no "way of sinners" in which to "stand"; all this will be entirely passed away. But praise will awaken praise, which will pour out from "the fountain" (the overflowing heart) "of Israel."

The enumeration of tribes that follows has peculiar difficulties. "Little Benjamin, their ruler,"† seems unsuited every way. A reference to Saul is most

* *B'* after a verb of motion. Neither the grammar nor the context necessitates "in holiness," as Delitzsch, Moll, and others, maintain.

† There is no "with," as in the common version: the revised is as here.

(iv.) the practical condition.

There is little [c]Benjamin, their conqueror;
the princes of [d]Judah, their close compacted band;
the princes of [e]Zebulon;
the princes of [f]Naphtali.

6 (28–31: The conquest of the earth.
(i.) Israel empowered.

Thy God hath commanded thy strength:
[g]confirm, O God, what thou hast wrought for us.

(ii.) the nations dependent.

Because of thy [h]temple at Jerusalem,
kings shall bring [i]presents unto thee.

[c] Num. 2. 22. Ps. 80. 2.
[d] Num. 2. 3.
[e] Num. 2. 7. 1 Chr. 12. 34.
[f] Num. 2. 29. 1 Chr. 12. 34.
[g] *cf.* Ps. 20. 2. *cf.* Phil. 1. 6. Ps. 138. 8.
[h] *cf.* Is. 60. 13, 14.
[i] Ps. 72. 10.

improbable; and the word implies at least a strict, if not a severe rule. In that future day to which the psalm refers, Benjamin will certainly not be the ruling tribe. I must agree with Moll, therefore, in translating "their conqueror," literally, "their treader down," but this as meaning Israel's warrior-tribe. Benjamin was certainly and typically this, as Jacob's prophecy from the first declared him. "Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf," says the dying patriarch; and this character was strikingly shown when they braved, though nearly to their own destruction, the united strength of Israel.

The typical meaning cleaves to this, as we trace it on from Genesis to Joshua. In the story of Joseph, who is Christ separated from His brethren and rising to power among the Gentiles, Benjamin represents Messiah in that form in which He abides among *them*—in which they recognize Him, "son of the right hand," not suffering, but reigning. This power he has not openly taken yet. But when the true Joseph reveals Himself to His brethren, Benjamin shall be united to Him—He shall take power after this manner upon the earth. "*Little* Benjamin"—made little of by the Gentiles, and by the Jews unknown in His true greatness,—shall become the conqueror of the nations, and may well therefore for his typical significance come foremost here. Yet is he, as such, *only in the train* of that greater glory which waits to be revealed to them, to which their eyes are now so absolutely closed. What an awakening will be theirs! And these thoughts may well underlie the mention, first of all, of "little Benjamin."

But now the princes of Judah have their place. Again a most difficult word is connected with them; a word found only here. But we need not go through the various conjectures as to it, as the most suitable meaning has also the best support.* Judah has, through all her history, and even spite of scattering over the earth, been always more or less a "close-compacted band." Nor shall aught dissolve the tie that binds them to one another. That tie also has always been what their name indicates—their *worship*; and when this was the *true* worship, it was the bond that united them into a nation and a kingdom. At the time to which the psalm looks forward, its power will be seen more gloriously than ever; nor will it relax again.

Next come the "princes of Zebulon," "dwellers in relationship," the thought again clearly answering to the condition upon which Israel are entering now. And lastly, "the princes of Naphtali," the "wrestlers," who have learned with Jacob, their father, the strength that is made perfect in weakness. They are really, as coming in the fourth place here, the "weak wrestlers." The lesson is surely not hard to be deduced.

How perfect is the inspiration breathing through all this! Every word is in place; every line tells in this vivid picture: "which things also we speak," says the apostle, "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth."

6. We have seen in the fourth section the prostration of the enemy's power; we have now the conquest of the earth, its being brought as a whole into subjection to God. Israel has come into a place of power as the seat of divine rule over the earth; and the psalmist seeks confirmation of that which has been wrought

* The meaning in the text is that given by Gesenius, Delitzsch, and Moll, following some Jewish expositors.

(iii.) the full realization.

[j] Rebuke the wild beast of the reeds,
the assembly of bulls, with the calves of the peoples,
[every one] [k] submitting with pieces of silver:
he hath scattered the peoples that delight in encounter.

(iv.) the world yielding.

Dignitaries arrive out of [l] Egypt:
Cush quickly stretcheth out her hands unto God.

7 (32–35): Closing praises.

Sing unto God, ye [m] kingdoms of the earth:
psalm unto the Lord:— Selah.—

(i.) God the Lord.

Unto him that [n] rideth on the heavens of heavens that are of old:

(ii.) His witness to Himself in word and deed.

lo, he [o] uttereth his voice, a voice of power.
Ascribe ye [p] power unto God:

(iii.) now manifest in Israel.

his majesty is over Israel,
and his power is in the clouds.

(iv.) praise from the whole earth.

O God, thou art [q] terrible, out of thy sanctuaries:
the Mighty One of Israel!
He it is that giveth [r] power and might unto the people.
[s] Blessed be God!

j *cf.* Ps. 22. 12, 13.
k *cf.* Ps. 45. 12. *cf.* Is. 45.14.
l *cf.* Is. 19.19–25.
m Ps. 100. 1.
n ver. 4. Ps. 104. 3.
o Ps. 29. 3–9. Ps. 46. 6.
p Ps. 29. 1. *cf.* Rev. 5. 13.
q Ps. 46. 8. Ps. 65. 5.
r Ps. 29. 11.
s Ps. 72. 18. 19.

for them. God is in His holy temple at Jerusalem, and the kings of the earth bring of course their tribute there. But there are still adversaries who have not submitted. "The beast of the reeds," whether crocodile or hippopotamus, is naturally Egypt; the assembly of bulls is a general figure for defiant strength. The calves are the people following these leaders. But there is no help where the creature strives against the power of God; and all in turn submit themselves. War is at an end with this submission, and the reign of peace ensues. Egypt sends its dignitaries; Cush (or Ethiopia) thrusts out the hands imploringly to God. Altogether it is a different picture from that which men have drawn of the peaceful triumphs of the gospel; but such is the resistance of man's heart to God that (to use the figure of a well-known writer) Mansoul must in any case be taken by siege. Good it is when in any way its pride is humbled, and it is made to sue for peace to Him who is of infinite mercy. "When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world shall learn righteousness."

7. The psalm ends with an exhortation to all the kingdoms of the earth to praise Him. As at the beginning He was seen riding upon the Araboth, the places of man's need and extremity, so now He is seen riding upon the heavens of heavens, high over all created things. Through all He sends out His voice of power, making Himself known in word and deed as Lord of all. All power belongs to Him, whose majesty is seen over Israel, and His power in the lightest tracings of the ever changing clouds.

The last verse is the response from all the earth. The Mighty One of Israel is owned as terrible—the object of reverential fear—out of His (heavenly and earthly) sanctuaries, giving power and might unto His people.

Sec. 2.

The four psalms that close the second book show us the salvation-work of Christ once more: first, in the cross as its basis, though in a different aspect from those in which we have seen it before; then in the revival of Israel, as the people of God; and lastly, in the rule of the King over the whole earth in truth and righteousness. Salvation is here seen therefore in its national and earthly aspect, and the view of the Cross in the sixty-ninth psalm agrees with this. In it we have the governmental side of atonement,—the trespass-offering,—as we had in the twenty-second the sin-offering, and in the fortieth the burnt-offering. The seventieth psalm, following this, is (with but some slight changes) the cut-

SECTION 2. (Ps. lxix.-lxxii.)
Christ's service of salvation.

Ps. lxix.

[1]PSALM LXIX.

The Source of salvation.

To the chief musician, upon [t]Shoshannim: [a psalm] of David.

1(1-6): Christ identifying Himself with His people in His offering.
(i.) the occasion of the cry.
(ii.) death in view.
(iii.) the inward distress.

"SAVE me, O God!
for the [v]waters are come in unto the soul.
I sink in deep [w]mire, where there is no standing:
I am come into deep waters, and the flood [x]overfloweth me.
I am [y]weary with my calling, my throat is dried:
mine eyes fail while I [z]wait for my God.

t Ps.45.title.
u cf. Ps. 22. 21 with Heb. 5. 7.
v ver. 2, 14, 15. Ps. 42. 7. *cf.* Lk. 12. 50.
w cf. Ps.40.2 with 2 Cor. 5. 21.
x cf. Jonah 2. 3 with Matt.12.40.
y cf. Ps. 22.2. *cf.* Ps.102.3.
z cf. Ps. 40.1.

off end of the burnt-offering psalm itself. But into the meaning of all this we shall have to inquire, as we take up these psalms in detail.

PSALM LXIX.

The sixty-ninth psalm is more frequently referred to in the New Testament than any other, except the twenty-second; and always as fulfilled in relation to the Lord Himself or in the fruits and consequences of His rejection. And it is plain, as Delitzsch says, that "The whole psalm is typically prophetic, in as far as it is a declaration of a history of life and suffering, moulded by God into a factual prediction concerning Jesus Christ, whether it be the story of a king or a prophet; and in as far as the Spirit of prophecy has even moulded the declaration itself into the language of prophecy concerning the future One."

It will not be strange, however, to find, according to the title which we have had already in connection with the forty-fifth psalm, *al-shoshannim*, "the lilies," (so different as these are,) Christ is not seen alone, but with those for whom He suffered. There is not merely "a lily," but "lilies." For a moment—and it is one of the difficulties of the psalm,—in the twenty-sixth verse, "Thy wounded ones"* are seen, as it were, side by side with "Him whom Thou hast smitten;" and this, with the judgment denounced upon the human persecutors, has been a difficulty in the minds of some in seeing the work of atonement in it at all, though the cross is certainly here, for nowhere else could Christ be smitten of God. But there is no forsaking of God, and "though the fact of smiting is referred to, its expiatory power is not at all treated!"

Now, it is surely true that the deepest suffering of the Cross, and absolutely necessary for atonement, was the forsaking of God (see Lev. iv. *notes*); yet not all the sacrifices speak of this, but only the sin-offering; and that too, only in its first and highest grades. Yet atonement is said to be made by the lower grades also, as well as by the burnt- and trespass-offerings.

Then, the burnt-offering psalm closes, as has been already mentioned with the denunciation of judgment upon the rejectors of Christ, which is here appended, as the seventieth psalm. So that the present one may be as well the trespass- as the fortieth, the burnt-offering. Two things are plainly in accordance with this, that the One who here suffers, owns, not "sins," as in the common version, but "trespasses;" and that He restores that which He took not away. This is not simply vicarious penalty, but that restitutive form of it which the trespass-offering presents.

Moreover the association of others with the Unique Sufferer here comes not, in what may be called the body of the psalm, but late in it, among the denunciations of the persecutors.

Admitting thus in the most distinct way that we have neither the full presen-

* One Hebrew MS. is referred to by Coleman, as well as the Syriac version, (which is perhaps as old as the first century A. D.), as having the singular "him," in both places.

(iv.) the trial from man.

More than the [a] hairs of my head are they that hate me without cause;
they that would cut me off—mine enemies wrongfully—are [b] mighty:
what I took not away, I then [c] restored.

(v.) the trespass-offering.

O God, thou knowest my [d] foolishness:
and my [e] trespasses are not hid from thee.

(vi.) the plea for limit.

Let not [f] those who wait on thee be put to shame in me, Lord, Jehovah of hosts:
let not those be confounded in me, who seek thee, God of Israel.

2 (7-12): In the midst of the strife between good and evil,

(i.) identification with God.

Because for thy sake I have borne [g] reproach:
shame hath covered my face.

(ii.) separated from his brethren.

I am become a [h] stranger to my brethren,
even an alien to the children of my mother.

(iii.) zeal of Thy house.

For [i] zeal for thy house hath devoured me:
and the [j] reproaches of those that reproached thee are fallen upon me.

(iv.) a reproach for weakness.

And I [k] wept while my soul fasted:
and it became a reproach to me.

a *cf.* Ps. 22. 16 with Matt. 27.39-44.
b *cf.* Ps. 18.17 with John 18. 4-6.
c *cf.* Ex. 22.1. *cf.* Lev. 5.14-16 with Isa. 53. 5,6.
d *cf.* Ps. 40. 12 with 1 Pet. 2. 22-24.
e *cf.* Ps. 41. 4 with 1 Jno. 3. 5.
f *cf.* Ps. 22. 4-6 with Jno. 18. 8,9. *cf.* Matt. 26. 31, 32.
g *cf.* Ps. 42. 10. *cf.* Ps. 109. 25. *cf.* Isa. 53. 3, 10.
h *cf.* Jno. 3. 21. *cf.* Matt. 26. 56.
i Jno. 2. 13-17; *cf.* Lk. 12. 50.
j *cf.* Ps. 89. 50, 51; *cf.* Lev. 16. 11; Rom. 15. 3.
k *cf.* Isa. 53. 3, 4 with Lk. 22. 41-44; *cf.* Ps. 35. 13-15.

tation of atonement, nor the fullness of divine grace flowing forth through this, and that these things are connected together as cause and effect, yet this seems not inconsistent with the character of offering set forth; while the governmental aspect of atonement which it expresses (see Lev. v. 14 *sq.*, *notes*) prepares us to find here, more strongly emphasized than elsewhere, the judgment upon rejectors.

1. In the first section we have that identification of Christ with His people which is necessarily involved in vicarious suffering. He is heard in His distress, as the waters of affliction penetrate even to the soul. He is sinking beneath the floods, and into the deep mire where there is no standing ground. The "strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him out of death," of which the epistle to the Hebrews speaks, is emphasized in what follows; and then the countless enemies, with their causeless enmity, while He is paying the debt due by others, not by Himself,—restoring what He took not away.

And here, in the light before God, He sees the awful reality of the evil He has taken upon Him,—hating it, the folly (or impiety) and the trespasses which spring out of this,—with the hatred with which God hates it; even while He owns it His, and bears in His soul the anguish of it.

But to this, then, there must be a limit, that those who wait on God in faith and in desire seek Him—Jehovah, God of hosts and God of Israel, their covenant-God through the sacrifice that He is offering—be not put to shame and confusion, in Him in whom are centred all their hopes. For upon His acceptance depends their salvation for whom He stands, their Representative before God. The work accomplished, righteousness in Him can safely appeal to divine righteousness,—and to righteousness in their behalf.

2. In the next section we go back to His previous life among men, to see Him in the constant strife between good and evil in the world, taking His part with God and therefore suffering. "For Thy sake," He says, "I have borne reproach: shame hath covered my face." And that not only among strangers; for here was the true Joseph, separated from His brethren, a stranger and an alien, refused as Israel's Messiah, and to become the Gentiles' Christ. And yet that dwelling-place of God in Israel, and which His work is to secure for them in a time near at hand, was that for which His zeal devoured Him. Twice He vindicated the holiness of what, until His last decisive rejection by them, He spoke

(v.) a proverb.
I made sackcloth also my garment:
and I became to them a [l]proverb. [l] *cf.* Mk. 15. 29. *cf.* Jno. 1. 46.
(vi.) the evil at its height.
The [m]sitters in the gate talk of me;
and [I am] the music of the [n]drinkers of strong drink. [m] *cf.* Deu. 21. 19 with Matt. 26.57–66. [n] *cf.* Mt. 27. 27–30.

3 (13–18): The Sanctuary-refuge.
But as for me, my [o]prayer is unto thee, Jehovah, in a time of acceptance:
(i.) an accepted prayer
O God, in the abundance of thy [p]loving-kindness answer me, in the truth of thy salvation. [o] *cf.* Heb. 5. 7. *cf.* Ps. 22. 21. [p] Ps. 61. 7.
(ii.) for deliverance.
[q]Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink:
let me be delivered from those that hate me, and from the deep waters. [q] Ps. 40. 2, 13.
(iii.) for resurrection.
Let not the [r]water-flood overflow me,
nor let the deep swallow me up;
and let not the [s]pit shut her mouth upon me! [r] ver. 1. [s] *cf.* Ps. 16. 10, 11.
(iv.) according to former experience
Answer me, Jehovah, for thy loving-kindness is good:
according to the multitude of thy [t]tender mercies turn unto me. [t] Ps. 109. 21.
(v.) and the ways of divine government.
And [u]hide not thy face from thy servant,
for I am in strait: answer me [v]speedily. [u] *cf.* Ps. 22. 1. *ctr.* Ps. 17. 15. [v] Ps. 70. 1, 5.
(vi.) the extremity.
Draw near to my soul,—redeem it;
because of mine enemies, [w]set me free. [w] *cf.* Isa. 48. 20. *cf.* Hos. 13. 14.

of as His Father's house, and which He would have cleansed from the abominations which were driving Him away from them. In fact, through evils such as these, that house was already empty; and they well knew it, yet repented not of the evil, nor recognized the Deliverer who would have restored all, but was rejected: "the reproaches of them that reproached Thee," He says, "fell on Me." Thus it was then that He became a reproach, because He felt the misery of their condition, wept and fasted in His soul because of it. They looked for power simply to be used on their behalf: they found weakness, for in fact the power that He had He could not use for them. Yet in that weakness which they found in Him He could serve them better, and He did—"crucified through weakness." Yet they understood not this sin which He so lamented; and His sackcloth made Him a "proverb"* to them. They reckoned as ways of men merely, and indeed of evil men, the ways of divine holiness in love which mourned for them. And this contemptuous misunderstanding of Him was found among the elders sitting in the gate, and with the drunkards who made music out of Him: all far from God alike.

3. From these therefore He turns to God; and though in sorrow, yet with the assurance of acceptance. He is in distress, yet doubts not His goodness nor faithfulness; in view of which last He can expect and claim deliverance at His hand. He prays, therefore, for deliverance from that in which He is sinking, and from the enemies that surround Him. He seeks that the flood may not overflow Him, which, as this has already taken place (ver. 2) must mean, not continuously overflow Him, but give place again. So, "let not the deep swallow me up," implies irrecoverable disaster; and "let not the pit shut her mouth upon me" is similar again in this respect. The expressions therefore correspond well with that in Hebrews, "to Him that was able to save Him," not "from," but "*out* of death: that is, by resurrection (Heb. v. 7. *Gk.*). This was how the Lord was actually answered.

He appeals to experience: He has tasted that "loving-kindness" which "is

*Notice how the "proverb" has to do with divine government, the moral of God's ways with men: to which, I suppose, every proverb can be referred. The *book* of Proverbs thus comes under the number five, as the verse does here.

4 (19-21): His human feelings. (i.) in the light. (ii.) no helpers. (iii.) the realization of this.

5 (22-28): Retribution. (i.) in their peace and prosperity.

Thou hast [x]known my reproach and my shame and my dishonor:
mine [y]oppressors are all before thee.
Reproach hath [z]broken my heart, and I am death-sick:
and I [a]looked for sympathy, and there was none;
and for comforters, and found [b]none.
Yea, they gave me [c]gall for my food,
and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

Let their [d]table before them be a trap,
and while they are at peace, a snare.

x ver. 5. Ps. 40. 9.
y Ps. 22. 12, 13, 16. Ps. 109. 3,4.
z ver. 7. *cf.* Ps. 55.12-14.
a Ps. 142. 4. *cf.* Matt. 26. 36-45.
b cf. Mk. 14. 29, 37, 50.
c cf. Jno. 19. 29, 30.
d Rom. 11. 9, 10. *ctr.* Ps. 23. 5.

good," and the "tender mercies," of which He knows that there are a multitude. And He beseeches that God hide not His face from One who is His servant, in this the hour of His strait: an appeal indeed, when we know what this service that He is fulfilling is.

The last verse of this section shows us the extreme point reached. Indeed the two words for redemption used here may seem to present difficulty in any application to the Lord. But there is a redemption by *power*, as well as by blood, and the application of the first word to the "avenger" (*goel* from *gaal*) shows that the latter conception of it is not necessary to the word. It has as its root-thought the demanding back of what has got away from one, and here (as the soul is the life) it is urged that God should intervene in power to restore the life which was His, and had yet passed, or was passing, away. Its restoration would be its "redemption."

The second word also is used for rescuing, setting free, as when it is said that the "people *rescued* Jonathan, that he died not" (1 Sam. xiv. 45). In both cases, therefore, it is the *kind* of redemption we are to consider, rather than the word simply.

4. There are now three verses which as a fourth section speak briefly of His human feelings under the pressure on Him. The reproach, the shame, the dishonor, are all felt and referred to God, as known to Him. His oppressors are before Him. Around there are none to sympathize with or minister comfort to the Sufferer. Yea, "they gave Me gall for My food," He says; "and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink." This was, as we know, the last indignity before He died: and this was the last scripture that the dying Saviour saw to be unaccomplished, and to fulfill which He uttered aloud His need. These verses, which evidently stand by themselves bring to an end the account of His sufferings, which now manifestly close in death.

5. The solemn denunciation follows, of retribution upon the enemies of Christ and of His people. It will be realized in an entirely different manner according to our conception of the speaker, and of the spirit which breathes in it. If these are the words of mere personal feeling, we shall naturally put them in contrast with the words of Him who at the cross itself prayed for His murderers. This was what was in His heart, and the plea He makes for them, that they knew not what they did, was the sanction of such a prayer. But then there would be those for whom plainly it could no more be uttered. Divine love itself would have to affirm the righteous doom of those who respond to it but with hatred, and this is the character of those before us here. Hence there is nothing incongruous in this being the language of the Saviour Himself, though not historically His utterance; nay, it is its being His that makes it all so perfectly and manifestly right. In the words of no other is the truth of retribution so strongly emphasized as in His own. Who so competent to speak of it as He who had come down to save men from it? Who could warn so solemnly as He who is the incarnation of divine love itself? Does not that same love speak here when

(ii.) the cutting off of their confidence.
(iii.) God revealed.
(iv.) desolation.
(v.) governmental reason.

Let their eyes be [e]darkened, that they see not;
and make their [f]loins continually to shake.
Pour out thine [g]indignation on them;
and let the fierceness of thine anger seize on them.
Let their camp be [h]desolate;
let there be no dweller in their tents.
For they have persecuted him whom [i]thou hast smitten,
and they talk to the suffering of thy [j]wounded ones.

e *cf.* Jno. 12. 39-41. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 11, 12.
f *cf.* Lk. 21. 25, 26.
g *cf.* 1 Thess. 2. 16.
h *cf.* Mt. 23. 38. *cf.* Lk. 21. 20-24.
i *cf.* Ps. 22. 1, 15. *cf.* Isa. 53. 10.
j *cf.* Isa. 63. 9.

it is heard saying, Let that be, which as the sentence of the Throne at last will actually be?

There is this difference, however, which may be pleaded: that the judgment is in fact that which overtakes men here, and (except by implication) it does not reach into eternity. This is, as we know, the character of Old Testament judgments generally. They are such as come upon men here, the visible witnesses of that which is invisible and eternal. But that alters nothing as to their essential nature, while it gives an additional reason why it should be brought before us in this manner. The visible government of God on earth, even though clouds and darkness are about it, has its attestations and evidences as that which (to use the words of a noted unbeliever) "makes for righteousness." And the dealings of God with Israel in their disobedience and rejection of Christ are a special example of this kind. Thus God's dealings with men on earth are fitly to be put before us as anticipations and pledges of what in a coming day will come out more manifestly.

Thus we cannot put the Christ of the Old Testament in contrast with the Christ of the New. The grace of the gospel itself exhibits its glory against a back-ground of "eternal judgment." And we need no apology for the language of the psalm, though we may need an explanation of it. If it were not a judgment Christ Himself could affirm, then there could be no justification of it at all, from any lower platform. It would be but the language of human passion and infirmity, susceptible of no further interpretation than as that, and to be left to the condemnation of the enlightened conscience.

The snare of peace and prosperity is what is first insisted on: not, of course, the mere well-filled table of a glutton or an epicure, but this as the image of that enjoyment of present things which for the carnal shuts out what is spiritual and eternal. Thus it is indeed a trap and a snare. How busy, even among Christians, is Satan in shutting out the things of God just by the occupation with and pressure of things which in themselves may not be evil, but which we have not learned to connect with God and to use for God. Alas for the secular part of our lives which in the stealthiest fashion filches away from us so much of "what is really life" (1 Tim. vi. 19: "the life which is life indeed," R. V.). And for the man whose heart is set on earthly things, what a silken snare is their possession! We murmur at the evils and miseries that face us everywhere; but what would it be if men were fed to the full! Judgment may come as well in the smiling abundance which fattens and narrows the heart, as in the rougher fashion in which it is easier to discern it.

The time yet comes in which the eyes darken, and that in which was men's confidence is removed. Then the "loins" begin to "shake." The dread of the unseen, never anything else but a dread, comes upon them. God begins to be manifested, but in wrath which lays hold upon the guilty. Presently a desolate camp in the desert, a "wall," as the idea is,—a mockery of protection for the feebleness that sought once to it for shelter, but is gone; the tents there, but empty;—becomes the figure of their doom: themselves, where are they?

These four verses bring us to the natural pause in a septenary series, as this is. The last three unveil, as usual, the spiritual meaning. The fifth gives the

(vi.) the limit reached.

(vii.) the end.

6 (29-33): Victory.

(i.) the cause of praise.

(ii.) God magnified by testimony.

(iii.) replacing the old sacrifices.

(iv.) to the joy of the afflicted.

(v.) on account of His ways.

[k] Impute* iniquity according to their iniquity;
and let them not [l]come into thy righteousness.
Let them be [m]blotted out of the book of the living:
and let them not be enrolled among the righteous.

But I,—[n]poor and suffering;—
thy [o]salvation, O God, setteth me on high.
I will [p]praise the name of God with a song,
and magnify him with confession.
This also shall please Jehovah,
better than an ox—a [q]bullock having horns and hoofs.
The [r]afflicted see it [and] are glad;
ye that [s]seek God, let your heart revive.
For Jehovah [t]listeneth to the poor,
and hath not despised his [u]prisoners.

* Literally, "give."

k *cf.* Ps. 109. 7 with Matt. 27. 24, 25. *ctr.* Lk. 23. 34 with Ps. 22. 22-31.
l *cf.* Ps. 109. 14.
m *cf.* Ps. 109. 13.
n Ps. 109. 22. Ps. 40. 17.
o ver. 1.
p Ps. 22. 22. Ps. 40. 3. Ps. 109. 1, 30, 31.
q Ps. 40. 6-8. *cf.* Ps. 51. 16, 17, 19.
r Ps. 22. 26.
s *cf.* Is. 65. 8-10.
t Ps. 61. 1.
u *cf.* Is. 53. 8.

reason according to divine government; and here alone it is—in a most fitting place, surely,—we see that there are other sufferers than the One great figure here. The part of the guilty ones whose judgment is here detailed,—*their* part in the Cross was only persecution: with the divine mystery of it, to which we owe all our blessing, they had naught to do. Yet that "they have persecuted Him whom Thou hast smitten," adds surely to the horror of their crime,—a crime for which they would in this very fact seek its justification rather. Why should they not persecute where God had smitten? When that cry that God had forsaken Him reached the ears of those who stood round the cross, would it not indeed seem like such a justification? They had done as they would, and no intervention of God had come in for Him: God had not smitten them, but Him! Just so do things conspire often to seal the delusion of those who invite delusion. Is it not a sign of such a judicial sentence recorded against them as the next verse speaks of,—their iniquity imputed *as* iniquity, so that they are given over to what they have chosen? All divine grace is to them now but as the utterance of parables which may have more than one interpretation, and be fatally misconstrued.

The association of others with the Lord in this respect, or the mention of them side by side with Him, need not, as I think, be of any special difficulty here. They are not associated with Him in that which was His atoning work, but only in the persecution by His enemies, which could not possibly have wrought this. It was important, on the other hand, to bring them in, just because the actual persecution of the Lord Himself belonged to one generation only by the necessity of the case, but the persecution of His people is, in one way or other, repeated through all generations. In convicting of this guilt, it was important to show that these things are by the Lord Himself classed together: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?"

Moreover, there is a difference in the experiences: "Thy wounded ones" is not just the same as "whom Thou hast smitten"; and nothing but the parallelism found in the poetry of Scripture could have suggested the rendering of the former as the common version has given it. But the parallel does not require to be carried to this extent.

"Add iniquity to their iniquity" is not also the necessary rendering of the twenty-seventh verse; and the moral argument seems against it in any way that this can be explained. The word is not "add," but literally "give," which may be rendered "put," and which in Jonah i. 14 is used for, "*lay* not upon us innocent blood," that is, "impute" it not. We may safely translate it here, "impute iniquity according to their iniquity,"—reckon it for what it is. They

7 (34-36): The consummation.
(i.) a concord of praise.
(ii.) for salvation.
(iii.) and inheritance by the lovers of His Name.

Let the [v]heavens and earth praise him:
the seas, and all that moveth therein.
For God will save [w]Zion, and build the cities of Judah:
and they shall dwell there, and have it in [x]possession.
And the seed of his servants shall inherit it,
and those that [y]love his name shall dwell therein.

[v] Ps. 96. 11, 12.
[w] Ps. 48.1-3. Is. 52. 7-10.
[x] Is. 44. 26. Jer. 30. 18-22.
[y] Ps. 70. 4.

Ps. lxx.

[2]PSALM LXX.

Contrasted Consequences.

To the chief musician: [a psalm] of David to bring to [z]remembrance.

[z] Ps. 40. 13-17.

(i.) a cry to the Unchangeable.
(ii.) defeat of enemies.

[H]ASTEN,] O God, to [a]deliver me;
hasten, Jehovah, to my help.
They shall be [b]ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul:
they shall be driven [c]backward and put to dishonor that delight in my harm.

[a] *cf.* Ps. 71. 12.
[b] Ps. 35. 4, 26.
[c] *cf.* Jno. 18. 6.

have reached in fact the limit of forbearance: let the judgment now proceed. In the next verse, therefore, it is argued that the death-penalty is their desert: "let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written (enrolled) among the righteous."

6. The victory of Christ and righteousness is now briefly celebrated. It is the victory of God, and His Name is declared and glorified in it. The One who was just now the poor and sorrowful One is set on high; and the song of praise begins with the voice of Christ Himself, filled with the joy of God being magnified in the testimony of this deliverance. What does it not imply of joy that shall never end, that work accepted, sin put away, death annulled, Satan overcome! Now has come the substance of the past shadows. The sacrifices are replaced by that which pleases God better than all these. Balm for the afflicted is here; the seekers of God have a heart-reviving message: for the poor are not neglected by Him, and the prisoners—though justly suffering—are not despised by His grace, when they turn to Him. It is the gospel already beginning to be heard in the synagogue of Nazareth (Luke iv. 18, 19).

7. Heaven and earth, with the seas and all that are therein, are bidden therefore to praise the Lord together: for Zion shall be saved, the throne of His kingdom upon earth, and the witness of its salvation. Judah too (the worshiper) shall have his cities rebuilt, and dwell in them. And the inheritance shall be for the seed of Jehovah's servants, and for the lovers of His Name. Amen.

Psalm LXX.

The seventieth psalm, as has been said, is but (with slight modifications) the last five verses of the fortieth psalm, the burnt-offering psalm, here put by themselves as an appendix to the trespass-offering. Is not this repetition explanatory of what is in the title: "to bring to remembrance"? Assuredly David's heart was not so poor in praise as to be in any need of repeating himself after this manner, except "remembrance" could be in this manner better secured. And assuredly it is not a "fragment accidentally detached," as Cheyne views it, and, of course, accidentally inserted! It is a wonder that such blunders, as this would indicate them to be, should after all give the critics so much labor.

The numerical structure shows that it is as perfectly in place, as the title shows the one who placed it here to have known what he was doing. It is so completely in place that it can be transferred here from the place it fills in the fortieth, with its numbers and their indications all unchanged; and so I have transferred it. Its following the trespass-offering here, as there the burnt-offering, argues something else than chance in such an arrangement. Leave it out

(iii.) they shall realize their shame.
(iv.) the test of experience.
(v.) the weak with the Strong.

They shall turn back on account of their shame,
that say, [d]Aha! Aha!
All those that [e]seek thee shall be joyful and glad in thee:
those that love thy salvation shall say continually,
Let God be [f]magnified.
But I am [g]poor and needy: make haste unto me, O God!
my help and my deliverer art thou:
Jehovah, make no [h]tarrying.

[d] *cf.* Mk. 15. 29.
[e] Ps. 69. 32.
[f] Ps. 34. 2, 3.
[g] Ps. 69. 33.
[h] Ps. 141. 1.

Ps. lxxi.

[3]PSALM LXXI.

The Revival of Israel.

1 (1–5): Perpetual sufficiency.
(i.) in the Unchangeable.
(ii.) for salvation.
(iii.) and dwelling-place.

IN thee, Jehovah, have I taken [i]refuge:
let me never be [j]ashamed.
In thy [k]righteousness deliver me and cause me to escape:
incline thine ear unto me, and save me.
Be unto me a dwelling in the [l]rock whither I may resort continually:
thou hast given commandment to save me;
for my cleft of the rock and my fortress art thou.

[i] Ps. 31. 1–3.
[j] Ps. 25. 2, 3, 20. Is. 29. 22–24. Joel 2. 26, 27.
[k] Ps. 7. 8–11. Is. 54. 17.
[l] Ps. 62. 2, 7. Is. 26. 3, 4.

of this place, and the two psalms following it are displaced also, and it would be difficult to adjust them satisfactorily to their altered relations.

The psalm *is* for a remembrance; and therefore the repetition is of much more importance than the differences, which are but slight. The Cross is so central in human history, its consequences are so all-embracing and enduring, that such a reminder as this, appended to each form in which it comes before us, is in no wise strange or to be wondered at. *And the strangeness of the manner only calls attention to it the more.* Even the apparent clumsiness, as men would account it,—the first word omitted, as if the leaf had been hastily torn out,—to one who believes in inspiration, fixes the eye upon it. The unbeliever scoffs, as he did at the Cross itself; faith inquires, and not only finds answer, but learns to recognize God in what seems most human,—God that was in Christ, most gracious, where in humblest form.

The psalm is so simple as scarcely to need an exposition; and in this also it is suited to its work. It only needs to be put in connection with the psalm it follows. The Lord is then realized to be the Speaker, as is quite clear in the fortieth psalm. The contrary lot of those who are His enemies, and those who love His salvation, is then apparent.

Psalm LXXI.

The third psalm of this series is plainly, in accordance with its place, a resurrection psalm. Israel is seen—although anticipatively—renewing her youth. God is glorified in one who has been of old His witness, and who now witnesses for Him in self-abasement, in the old age that is upon her, but in which she finds Jehovah's strength and righteousness her sole confidence and boast. The psalm is almost throughout a prayer, but which turns in the end into joyful assurance and praise.

1. The first section is a simple appeal to God as the confidence of faith, the one sufficiency. As an introduction it gives us, as very commonly, the theme, which the rest of the psalm expands and illustrates. Faith is the expression of self-renunciation, which as such leaves God Himself in what He is, to be its all, and thus occupied with Him without distraction, its plea is founded on His very

(iv.) in the trial from man.

O my God, [m] rescue me out of the hand of the wicked one,—
out of the grasp of the [n] unrighteous and cruel man.

(v.) the weak with the Strong.

For thou art my [o] hope, O Lord Jehovah,
my confidence [p] from my youth.

2 (6-11): Israel, God's witness, in her conflict.

(i.) God their strength from the beginning.

By thee have I been [q] upheld from the womb:
thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels:
my [r] praise shall be continually of thee.

(ii.) preserved through vicissitudes.

I have been as a [s] wonder unto many:
but thou art my strong refuge.

(iii.) glorifying God.

My mouth shall be [t] filled with thy praise,
with thy glory, all the day.

(iv.) fail not when I fail.

Cast me not off in the time of [u] old age:
forsake me not when my vigor [v] faileth.

(v.) exercise.

For mine enemies speak against me:
and they that watch for my soul take [w] counsel together,

(vi.) in extremity.

Saying, God hath [x] forsaken him:
pursue and take him, for there is none to deliver.

m Ps. 17. 12, 13.
n *cf.* Zech. 14. 1-3. *cf.* Ps. 10. 18 *cf.* Is. 51. 13.
o ver. 14. Ps. 78. 7. Jer. 17. 7, 17.
p ver. 17. *cf.* Jer. 2. 2, 3. *cf.* Ezek. 16. 8, 22, 60, 61. *cf.* Hos. 11. 1-4.
q Is. 46. 3. Is. 63. 8, 9.
r Is. 65. 1.
s *cf.* Deut. 28. 37. *cf.* Is. 18. 7. *cf.* Ps. 126. 2, 3.
t Ps. 35. 28. Ps. 113. 1-3.
u ver. 18. *cf.* Hos. 7. 9. *cf.* Is. 46. 4.
v Ps. 73. 26. *cf.* Is. 40. 28-31.
w Ps. 31. 13. *cf.* Ps. 83. 3, 4.
x *cf.* Is. 36. 10; *cf.* Dan. 9. 10-14.

nature. It is a safe argument, if a true one: "I have put my trust in Thee, let me not be put to confusion." And thus God's righteousness can be pleaded by a sinner, the Cross of Christ being the full declaration and justification of this. The psalmist, divinely taught, goes to the full extent of this, claiming God as his rock-dwelling, to which he can resort whatever the danger. And His word assures him—the prophecies of God concerning Israel?—that He has given commandment to save him: "for Thou," he repeats, "art my cleft of the rock and my fortress."

. But Israel is in the sore trial of the last days, and the hand of the wicked one presses sorely upon them. He can only repeat that the *Lord Jehovah*—the immutable One, supreme over all opposing force, is his hope and his confidence "from his youth."

This last expression in its application to Israel, is an interesting one, reminding us, as it does, of that "remnant according to the election of grace" which has always been among the people, and which is a proof advanced by the apostle, that even now God has not "cast them away." At the time these psalms carry us on to, the Christian dispensation being over, these which are the true "brethren" of the King born in Bethlehem, "will return," according to Micah's prediction (chap. v. 2, 3), "to the children of Israel,"—to take their place upon the ground of God's promises to her. This voice of theirs now, then, as heard in the psalm, connecting itself with the long line of faith from the beginning, is itself a witness of God's returning favor to her. Israel is awaking from her sleep of centuries: the resurrection of the nation is begun.

2. Accordingly we find now, in mystical expression, what God has been to His people from the beginning, from their birth as a nation; brought through the various and chequered history in which they have been in so many ways "a wonder to many:" amid all their perils from without and from within, the Lord having shown Himself their "strong refuge." Their preservation is indeed to-day the standing miracle of history, and a testimony to God, spite of (nay, in) their very unbelief. Now they are openly to glorify Him: "My mouth shall be filled with Thy praise,—with Thy glory all the day."

Yet as in the mystery of spiritual things, the soul which is awaking from the sleep of death, awakes to realize the "body of death" which clings to it, so the remnant brought to God in those days will find themselves amid the national

3 (12–15): Drawing near to God. (i.) the cry for God. (ii.) to destroy enemies.	O God, be not [y] far from me:	y Ps. 35. 22. Ps. 10. 1.
	my God, hasten to my help.	
	Let them be [z] ashamed [and] consumed that are adversaries to my soul:	z Ps. 70. 2, 3.
	let them be covered with reproach and dishonor that seek my hurt.	
(iii.) reassurance.	But for me, I will [a] hope continually,	a ver. 5.
	and will [b] praise thee yet more and more.	b ver. 8.
(iv.) experience.	My mouth shall tell of thy [c] righteousness,—	c ver. 2.
	of thy salvation all the day:	
	for I know not how to [d] reckon it.	d *cf.* Ps. 40. 5.

decay which might well be the signs of speedy dissolution. It is the time of old age, and strength has failed: the spiritual life is well nigh departed. As the ravens watch the expiring struggles of their anticipated prey, their enemies congregate and consult together. "God has forsaken him" is a verdict that looks so like the truth as to be agony to the soul that seeks Him. Such agonies are often to men the birth-throes of a new life; and so will Israel find it in her day.

3. A grand thing it is when, in the dissolution of all other things, God is found to be the one necessity of the soul. We can reason this out at any time; but to have got it in experience is quite another matter. Thus come to us those days of famine, which may by no means be openly that. The food may be there that does not feed us; the sun may shine as of old, but it does not warm us: the change is in ourselves. Everything seems unreal, but it is the real into which we are entering, and which is only demonstrating for us the unrealities in which we have lived. No man that knows not God has hold of reality; and it is the mercy of God when we wake up to the truth that the possession of God is the possession of what is real, and, in a true sense, of all that is real.

Israel has been, for long, according to Hosea's prophecy, "without a sacrifice, and without an ephod," ignoraut of the better sacrifice that has come, and unable to present the prescribed offerings of their law; and when, with some dawning light among them, they begin to seek approach to God according to the old ritual, Satan will make his last and decisive attack to turn them away from Him to whom the Spirit of God would lead them on. "Another," a false Christ, "will come in his own name," as our Lord predicted, and "him they will receive." Cast out of the land, and with the abomination of desolation in their holy place, the remnant of true-hearted ones may indeed be tempted to think that "God has forsaken them." It is a crisis in their history for which, as we know, the Lord has specially provided in that discourse after His own decisive rejection, when their house had now to be "left unto them desolate." And may it not be that just by all this their hearts may be wrought upon and led back to Him whose sheltering wing would (how often!) have been stretched over them, but *they* "would not."

"Upon the wing of abominations," according to the literal translation of Dan. ix. 27, "the desolator" comes! How affecting the contrast! As the desolation follows in answer to the idolatrous challenge from Israel's holy place, will not hearts be opened to respond more intelligently to the love that seeks them? will it not be like the look which awakened Peter to the outgushing of repenting sorrow for having denied His Lord?

Then will the cry go forth indeed, "O God, be not far from me!" and that in intimate connection with the cry against those "adversaries to their soul" that are covering the land. But where faith is begun, the tug upon the heart-strings tunes them to music; and it is not at all incomprehensible, that speedy reassurance: "But for me, I will hope continually, and will praise Thee more and more." Can we not understand, too, as the fruit of this exercise,—perhaps, as a sorrow deeper than their own has been gaining upon them—that return to what, in the first section, we have spoken of as so much the theme of the psalm: "My

4 (16-18). The creature-place.
(i.) Jehovah's might and righteousness.
(ii.) taught and teaching.
(iii.) renewal of strength.

I will go in the might of the Lord Jehovah,
I will make mention of thy righteousness, of thine alone.
O God, thou hast taught me from my [e]youth,
and unto this time I tell of thy marvelous works:
Now, also, when I am [f]old and grey-headed, O God,
forsake me not,
until I have [g]declared thine arm to [this] generation,
thy might to every one that is to come.

5 (19-21): Israel with God.
(i.) who like thee?
(ii.) the salvation.
(iii.) fullness of blessing.

Thy righteousness, also, O God, reacheth to the height,
who hast done great things:
O God, [h]who is like thee?
Thou who hast shown us many and sore [i]troubles
shalt [j]revive us again,
and bring us up again from the depths of the earth.
Thou shalt increase my [k]greatness,
and comfort me on every side.

[e] vers. 5, 6.
[f] ver. 9.
[g] Ps. 78. 1-7. *cf.* Lk. 2. 25-32.
[h] Deut. 32. 31. Mi. 7. 18.
[i] *cf.* Jer 30. 7. *cf.* Matt. 24. 21, 22.
[j] *cf.* Ezek. 37. 1-14. *cf.* Hos. 6. 1-3.
[k] Is. 54. 1-10. Zech. 10. 10.

mouth shall tell of Thy righteousness, and of Thy salvation, all the day: for *I know not how to reckon it*"?

4. Thus they are ushered into the place of blessing: so simple as it is, after all! Just the creature place, from which man departed at the first, seeking to be as God, and thus coming into independence of God: now to take up again dependence, and with the confession of the infinite sin of departure,—the need of salvation already owned.

Now then the place of strength is found, but Whose strength? How significantly do those titles come in again, found in the first section with such thoughts as these, but still more closely and more triumphantly joined together: "I will go in the *might of the* LORD JEHOVAH; I will make mention of Thy righteousness, of THINE ALONE." Yes, the refreshing stream runs low, but oh, the refreshment! The creature place and the creature privilege are never disjoined. If the creature is for God, God is for the creature: and which is it that finds the blessing here?

Intensely interesting, too, is it to find that now they begin to understand how God has been teaching them from the beginning: "Jehovah, Thou hast taught me from my youth:" and they enter into His purpose through them to declare His own marvelous works. It is now that they are beginning intelligently to fulfill this. His witnesses they have ever been in fact, but now in integrity and uprightness they are this.

Still, and because of this, the consciousness of feebleness and decay is with them, and they cry to God as alone their ability to fulfill what is in their heart. And this is no less than to be the witness of God's power to all succeeding generations. This they will assuredly be. Sustained in perpetual strength by this same power, they will be henceforth on earth His living testimony. Age and decay gone, they will abide as in resurrection strength and beauty. The stump of the cut-down tree shall send forth fresh shoots, the holy seed being the sap of it. "Israel shall bud and blossom, and fill the face of the earth with fruit."

5. Israel is now with God. The language of prayer is changed for that of praise and confident expectation. "Thy righteousness, O God, reacheth to the height, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto Thee?" Who indeed? And yet that simple truth, surely and whole-heartedly believed, is the end of all evil, the assurance of all blessing to every soul that receives it. It is the fall overcome, the tempter's suggestion vanquished.—"ye shall be as God," —the restlessness of man's will at an end; sabbatic rest and peace have come

6 (22-24): The song of victory. (i.) the faithfulness of God. (ii.) deliverance. (iii.) the ban upon evil.

I will also [l]praise thee with the psaltery—thy truth, my God:
I will psalm unto thee upon the harp, thou Holy One of Israel.
My lips shall [m]sing aloud when I psalm unto thee, and my soul which thou hast set free.
My tongue also shall talk of thy [n]righteousness all the day:
for they are put to [o]shame, for they are confounded, that sought my hurt.

[l] Ps. 92. 1-3. Ps. 117.
[m] Ps.132.16. Is. 54. 1.
[n] vers. 2,19.
[o] ver. 13. Is. 45.17,24.

where and as far as this is realized. Israel here strikes the key-note of the world's praise.

The full salvation of the people is involved in this. The same hand that humbled will now exalt, and "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." The full truth of the past condition is owned: the nation is quickened and brought up from the depths of the earth—from its living tomb. Nor is this enough for the plenteous grace of God: "Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side."

6. The triumph is now celebrated. It is God's victory, as we have seen. If it were not that, the whole tone and character of what is here would be lowered immeasurably. Israel has been, however she may have failed in real subjection to God, His witness upon the earth. And if men also have failed in discerning this. Satan, the great adversary, has no less used them according to his knowledge, in his opposition to God's purpose in them. This strife has gone on through a large part of human history. Now, thank God, the adversaries are overthrown. The rejoicing is not a mere personal or national one, but in the removal of that which has hindered man's blessing and the glory of God: and these two things are inseparably joined together. Hence the triumph may well be celebrated.

The truth—or faithfulness—of God is the first note of the song; with that accompaniment of stringed instruments, the meaning of which we have in some measure learned. We ought to know, and yet do not, what is the difference between psaltery and harp in this way. If they had been treated as more than curious questions of technical knowledge or antiquarian research, we should no doubt have known. But sheer unbelief has prevailed with us to make the word of God as dull and barren as it first of all concluded it to be; and we have had our reward.

Then, as connected with this truth of God, the soul that God has set free sings aloud to God of this deliverance. Nature, the nations of the earth, as well as Israel, have all their part in this; and if it is not mentioned, it should not need to be. Every reader of Scripture ought to know what is connected with Israel's redemption—in the strong language of an apostle, the apostle of the Gentiles, "if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but LIFE FROM THE DEAD?" (Rom. xi. 15).

For this the ban upon evil must be carried out, and "true and righteous" are the judgments of the Almighty. No weak woman's wail must mingle with this triumph. Nay, "my tongue shall talk of Thy righteousness all the day long: for they are put to shame, for they are confounded, that sought my hurt."

PSALM LXXII.

The last psalm of the salvation-book of the Psalms shows the full extent of the salvation in its earthly aspect, in the Melchizedek reign of Christ, King of righteousness and peace; peace being the effect of righteousness, and thus abiding. And this is a true picture of what is come, although there are things which the New Testament adds to it, which are not seen here, nor in the Old Testament at all. For the Old Testament does not reveal the full and final, eternal

Ps. lxxii.

1 (1–4): Righteousness effecting peace. (i.) the righteousness of God in a King of men. (ii.) discriminative. (iii.) the effect realized. (iv.) meeting the need of men.

[s]PSALM LXXII.

Salvation for the Earth.

For [p]Solomon.

O GOD, give the [q]king thy judgments;
and thy righteousness to the king's [r]son.
He shall [s]judge thy people in righteousness:
and thine [t]afflicted with judgment.
The [u]mountains shall bring peace unto the people,
and the hills, by righteousness.
He shall do justice to the afflicted of the people:
he shall save the children of the needy,
and shall [v]break in pieces the oppressor.

p Ps. 127, title. cf. 1 Chr. 29. 1-25. cf. Matt. 12. 42 with Is. 9. 6, 7.
q Ps. 21. 1-4. Ps. 45. ctr. Is. 30. 33.
r Ps. 132. 11. cf. Matt. 1. 1. cf. Matt. 22. 41-45. cf. Rev. 5. 5. cf. Rev. 22. 16.
s cf. Is. 11. 1-4;

Ps. 94. 15. t ver. 13; cf. Ps. 82. 3, 4; cf. Is. 25. 4; cf. Zeph. 3. 12, 13. u Is. 52. 7; cf. Is. 2. 2, 3; cf. Jer. 31. 5, 6, 23. v Is. 49. 24-26; Jer. 30. 18-22.

condition of things, even for the earth, as the New Testament reveals it, save in that brief intimation of "new heavens and a new earth," with which Isaiah closes. Types and dark sayings, of course, there are, but no plain speech otherwise. For the Old Testament the kingdom of Christ ends all; which is true in a most important sense, but incomplete: for we have not the millennial limitation, the uprise of evil at the end, the judgment of the dead, and the change of the kingdom of the Son of man into the kingdom of the Father, when, having brought all things into the full final condition of blessing, the Son gives up that preparatory millennial rule into the Father's hand. All this could scarcely be revealed till Christ had come; and it is the manner of revelation to increase in fullness to the end. Yet, as Christ, after all, does reign for ever and ever,—the eternal throne being still "the throne of God and the Lamb," the kingdom to which the Old Testament looks on is, after all, eternal; and its view is simply (and necessarily) incomplete, not (of course) wrong. Yet this merging of the millennial in the eternal is that which no doubt has confused the minds of some who think they see more clearly, and have lately come to believe in two successive kingdoms of Christ as man: the millennial being merely introductory (as the Davidic) to the true Solomon reign of uninterrupted peace and much longer duration which yet precedes the eternal blessedness. But the twentieth of Revelation certainly finds no place for such a reign in the brief interval between the millennium and the judgment of the great white throne; while we are told that "*when* all enemies shall be subdued under Him,"—and the last enemy to be subdued is death,—"then shall the Son also Himself be subject to Him that put all things under Him" (1 Cor. xv. 28): thus excluding this reign of glory from the other side of it. However, let us take up the psalm.

1. The first section shows the principle of the kingdom,—peace as the effect of righteousness. This is what the apostle speaks of in relation to the antitypical Melchizedek, and which he draws from the language of the history in a way so deeply instructive for the interpretation of Scripture, and so declaring the divine perfection which is found throughout this. "For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, . . . *first* being by interpretation 'king of righteousness,' and *after that*, king of Salem, that is, 'king of peace.'" Melchizedek being as the translation of his own name "king of righteousness," this must come before his official title, "king of Salem," which being similarly translated means "king of peace." The meaning and order of these two Hebrew names are made in this way to define for us the principle that "righteousness" must go before "peace." This is only what Scripture elsewhere declares (in plain words) of that glorious time "when the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever" (Isa. xxxii. 17). But the apostle thinks evidently that there is no need of confirmation of what these two names declare. What an insight into the breadth of

2 (5-11): Progress of the kingdom. (i.) perpetuity. (ii.) ministry. (iii.) the effect realized.

They shall [w]fear thee as long as the sun,
and while the moon endureth, for all generations.
He shall come down like [z]rain on the mown grass,
as showers that water the earth.
In his days shall the righteous [y]flourish,
and there shall be abundance of [z]peace till the moon be no more.

w vers. 7,17. Ps. 89.36,37. Is. 66.22,23.
x 2 Sam. 23. 4. Ps. 65.9-13. Zech. 10.1. Prov. 19. 12.
y *ctr.* Ps. 73. 1. Is. 27. 6.
z Ps. 122. 5 -9; Is. 32. 17, 18; Is. 55. 12, 13; Mi. 4. 1-7.

Scripture, and what a revelation of its glory, he gives us by this method of proof!

This first section of our psalm, as we shall see, declares the same thing. First of all, in a prayer, the psalmist asks: "O God, give the king Thy judgments; and Thy righteousness unto the king's Son." Christ is both, as we know. Son of David, He takes the throne of David legally as that. But He is King also in a far higher way, and as such, divine righteousness belongs to Him by nature. No merely human hands can be trusted to hold in perfect equipoise this sceptre: and yet they are truly human hands: His of whom as Man, after a life of thirty years in this world, God could give testimony, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Now we have His careful discrimination in judgment, the first line speaking of strict equity; the second, bringing in (as lexicographers tell us), or at least allowing in it, the element of mercy also: "Thine afflicted, with judgment."

Then the effect is found: "The mountains," types of firmly established power, "shall bring peace to the people; and the hills" (the smaller magistracies), "*by righteousness.*" The perfect equity of the Head reflects itself in all that are His representatives.

And while no persons are favored in the judgment, the "afflicted" are tenderly considered, and "the children of the needy" cared for; while He breaks in pieces the oppressor.

2. Such is the character, then, of this government, so unique as it is among the sons of men. We now are called to see the kingdom in progress. Years do not change it: "They shall fear Thee as long as the sun, and while the moon endureth,—for all generations." Those glowing orbs of heaven are indeed the typical representatives of such power as this, the underived and the reflected; lights that have never erred from their appointed place since the day they were commissioned to "give light upon the earth." But no figures suffice to show Him forth aright; the next verse speaks of tender and reviving ministry: "He shall come down like rain on the mown grass"—the field that needs replacement of that which has been removed: "as showers that water the earth." There is no sweeter figure of spiritual influence than this which is the Spirit's own type. And the Spirit indeed it is, who works in unity with this glorious King; so that again we have righteousness and peace, though after a different manner, connected together: "In His days shall the righteous flourish, and there shall be abundance of peace till the moon be no more."

All this is as simple as it is blessed to contemplate: this is the progress of the kingdom in *time;* now we are to see its progress in extent; and here we naturally begin from the centre—from the land itself. The fourth verse of this section plainly defines the limits of the land itself, of Israel's land. "From sea to sea" is not the way in which dominion over the whole earth would be defined; nor again "from the River to the ends of the earth." The River, without any other definition, naturally means the Euphrates; and this was Israel's limit in one direction, according to the promise given to Abraham (Gen. xv. 18). From this point, the "ends of the *land*"—for so we should evidently understand it—reach to Egypt in the one direction, and to where the land ends, in the opposite direction eastward from this. And there is in this direction, and southward from it, everywhere a coast-line which is its "end." If the number of the verse (4), as that of earthly universality, seems to speak rather of world-wide dominion, all

(iv.) over the whole land.
(v.) governmental competence.
(vi.) conquests.
(vii.) complete rule.

And he shall have [a]dominion from sea to sea,
and from the [b]River unto the ends of the land.
The dwellers in the [c]desert shall bow before him,
and his enemies shall [d]lick the dust.
The kings of [e]Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents:
the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.
Yea, [f]all kings shall bow down before him:
all nations shall [g]serve him:

a *cf.* Gen. 15. 18. Zech. 9. 10.
b *cf.* Ex. 23. 31. *cf.* Ezek. 47. 13–21.
c Is. 35. 1, 2.
d Ps. 18. 43–45. Is. 49. 23. Mi. 7. 16–20.
e Is. 60. 9, 10. Ps. 45. 9, 12.
f *cf.* Rev. 19. 16.
g Is. 49. 1, 6, 7; Ps. 2. 8–11.

the terms of the description are against this. Must we not take it, then, as what there is little difficulty in applying it to, the *whole land?*

This, let us remember, is what Israel never yet has got—the land according to the promise to Abraham,—supplemented and explained by many an after-assurance. "From sea to sea," cannot be here from the Mediterranean to the Salt Sea, which would not be in any case a definition save for the very southernmost portion of her narrow possessions,—a straitness to which she limited herself, through unbelief. This could not be the extent of what is spoken of to them as "a good land and a large." The land of the Sidonians, which was promised to them, they never did possess, nor Mount Lebanon, which was a part of it. Edom, Moab, Ammon, Philistia, are all to belong to them, and never did. Though David's empire reached at one point to the Euphrates, it was only over tributary kings, and that land never was Israel's possession. And finally, if we are to interpret (and how can we avoid it?) "all the land of the Hittites," by what we are beginning to realize of what their land was, how far northward in that direction must we carry their boundary-line? (Comp. Gen. xv. 18–21; Ex. xxiii. 31; Josh. i. 2–4; Ezek. xlvii. 13–xlviii.)

It is not for us here to attempt a solution of the many difficulties which beset this subject, and which (if the Lord permit us to take up the book of Ezekiel) we must do there; but it ought to be evident already that as a definition of the land "from sea to sea" can be no less than from the Mediterranean to the Persian gulf. It is meant to be, and is, a wide dominion; from the Euphrates to the Nile and the Red Sea giving other limits.

But this land, as we find it to-day, contains many different people, and wide desert tracts. Notice, therefore, in connection with this, the perfect naturalness of the next verse, which speaks of the competency of the King to take possession of this wide and varied tract: "The dwellers in the *deserts* (or parched lands) shall bow before Him; and His enemies shall lick the dust;" how well does this account for the special mention of such as these in connection with the progress of a victorious King, when one would expect rather to find mention of strong peoples,—foes that it would need special might to subdue! A glance at the map will show its appropriateness, and this "desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose" (Isa. xxxv. 1).

Naturally, now, we are told of "conquests" (as the number would show) in foreign lands. "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts." Tarshish and the isles lie west from Palestine; Sheba and Seba south-east. The "isles," at least, speak of Japhet; Sheba may be Joktanite—Shemitic; Seba, Cushite—Hamitic: all the families of the earth seem thus to be represented in the homage rendered here. The conquests may be entirely peaceful ones. Nothing else is suggested. The names have no certain meaning. The people represent apparently the commerce of the world, which now, for the first time in its history, owns Christ. Its gain is consecrated unto the Lord of the whole earth.

But the tide of homage swells: "all kings bow down before Him: all nations serve Him." The universal empire is at last complete. The cross is really at last the symbol of power and imperial sway, under which the earth reposes, quiet in sabbatic rest.

3 (12-20): The full blessing.
(i.) faithfulness.
(ii.) compassion.
(iii.) Himself a sanctuary.
(iv.) tenderness to human need.

For he shall [h]deliver the needy when he crieth,
and the afflicted, that hath no helper.
He shall have [i]compassion on the impoverished and needy;
and shall save the souls of needy men.
He shall [j]redeem their souls from [k]oppression and violence:
and precious shall their blood be in his sight.
And he shall [l]live; and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba:
and prayer shall he make for him continually:
all the day shall he be blessed.

[h] vers. 2, 4.
[i] Ps. 111.4,5. Mi. 7.19,20.
[j] Ps. 107.1-3.
[k] Ps. 10.7,14. Ps. 101. 7,8. Zeph. 3. 13.
[l] Ps. 116. 9.

3. Again, before the book closes, we are called to look at the blessing of a rule which is service,—a glory unflecked with stain or shadow,—a David who is free to show the "kindness of God" to the maimed and ruined children of shame wherever they may be found. "For He shall deliver the needy when he crieth, and the afflicted, and him that has no helper." That is what the sign of the cross denotes, and by this we know the Lord. None that has owed salvation to Him but must know that there was no help possible for him beside, and that it could be found in no other. And "He shall have compassion on the impoverished and needy, and shall save the souls of needy men." Faithful, compassionate, He is thus the sanctuary refuge from the evil of the world, "deceit," the sin of the weak, and "violence" of the strong: and as the refuge-cities of Israel declared of old, "precious shall their blood be in His sight."

Such is He, and such was He in all essential reality, when He was among men, and in their hands, to do with Him as they would. Such was He whom they crucified: and now, though He be Lord of all, how do their hearts respond to this glory of His? How, but as is appreciated the need which He is always meeting,—the grace, therefore, which has come in to meet it. And this is what the fifteenth verse (the fourth of this section) gives, as I believe; although, as so frequently in the case of Old Testament evangel, there is a certain mystery about it, which the loose grammatical structure of Hebrew favors, and with which the character of the psalm as prophecy, and especially as typical prophecy, harmonizes; by which we must not be thrown back, but only made to look more closely at what is before us.

It seems impossible that the whole of the verse can be applied to the Lord. Whether we translate, "he shall live," (with the common version,) or "let him live," as many others, it seems trivial,* and out of keeping with the context, if so applied. On the other hand, the connection with the verse before is too obvious to have escaped notice, even where the full meaning has not been grasped. The revised version gives even "*they* shall live," which is the meaning, although in a verse like the present, too interpretative, perhaps, to be adopted, especially as it makes a similarly interpretative rendering necessary in the remainder of the verse.† But the "he" is merely a specific example of the delivered ones just spoken of, whose blood was precious in the sight of the King.

But if this be what we start with, to *whom* shall he give of the gold of Sheba (as the Hebrew literally), and who is this "he?" If it be the delivered one who gives to the King, this (remembering Who the King is) is surely feeble enough, though the expression of thankfulness; and if it be indefinite, there is the loss of connection with what precedes altogether. The receiver of the gift

* With Cheyne, for instance, it is hardly to be doubted as merely the court phrase, "Let the king live!"

† As in the case of the Revised: "*They* shall live, and to *him* shall be given of the gold of Sheba: and *men* shall pray for him continually; *they* shall bless him all the day long." Yet in the first and last instance "he" is given as an alternative in the margin.

(v.) the government of God in response.

There shall be [m] abundance of corn in the earth to the top of the mountains:
the fruit thereof shall shake like [n] Lebanon;
and they of the city shall [o] bloom like the herb of the earth.

(vi.) the victory of God.

His [p] name shall be for ever,
his name shall continue as the sun:
and [men] shall bless themselves in him: [q] all nations shall call him blessed.

[m] Ps. 67. 5-7.
[n] Ps. 92. 12. Is. 35. 2.
[o] ver. 7. Is. 66. 12-14.
[p] Ps. 8. 1. *cf.* Phil. 2. 9-11.
[q] *cf.* Ps. 22. 28, 29. *cf.* Is. 60. 3. *cf.* Is. 66. 10, 11.

would then be the delivered man; and this is not unsuited to our King of kings. Nay, we have heard of Him in the end psalm of the previous series, as One who has "led captivity captive, and received gifts for men," and understand it to be His manner to enrich those whom He delivers; and the "gold of Sheba" will be still better fitted to express this, if it mean, as seems to be the fact, "the gold of the 'Captor.'"* Typically we take "gold" to be the revelation of divine glory; and this is just the Captor's gold, with which He enriches those whom He sets free. The spiritual application therefore furnishes a consistent and worthy sense all through. Does any other?

But we have still the second part of the verse to interpret and account for: and here the general consent of commentators seems to apply both clauses to the King. It is the King then that is prayed for, and the King that is blessed. In application to a merely human king, also, this would be simple enough, and by such as fully hold the Messianic one it is urged that "'prayer shall be made continually for him' shows simply that the blessings enjoyed through Him raise the desire and request for His glory and continuance in power." But both this interpretation and the request, even so interpreted, seem to me unnatural. If men know who the King is,—and this, surely, cannot be unknown,—how can they doubt the continuance of it? how can they imagine that the kingdom of God, once come, will pass, save as dawn, perhaps, into full day?

I have no other alternative, therefore, but to believe that we have here expressed the priestly office of the true Melchizedek. Would it not be strange if this were altogether omitted? And if we have had at the beginning of the psalm, and variously through it, the plain reference to this character of royalty, is it not even to be expected that we should have somewhere in it the intercessory work of the "priest of the most high God"?

The same objections do not apply to the common understanding of the last clause of the verse. Consistent rendering throughout would seem to make this also the blessing of the needy one; and thus it would be the answer to the prevailing intercession of the Royal Priest on his behalf. The whole verse would thus be uniform, and any apparent inconsistency be taken away.

Such then being the glorious Mediator who stands for man Godward as for God manward, it is no marvel to find the divine government in response, with marvelous fertility of the ground, and men filling the cities with corresponding increase. The fields of corn shall rustle like the forests of Lebanon. Who can picture the blessing when the earth shows to the full the powers that now lie almost dormant in it?

Thus the King's Name which guarantees all this blessing, shall endure for ever: His name shall continue like the life-giving Sun, His image; and men shall bless themselves in Him, as being the highest possible thought of blessing. All nations shall call Him blessed.

Thereupon follows that out-burst of praise with which the second book ends: every line of truth having its natural end and outcome in this joy in God and worship. The Eternal God, the God of Israel, is He who alone doeth wonders.

*Sheba in Hebrew, would be undoubtedly akin to the words used in lxviii. 18: *shabhitha shebhi*, "thou hast led captive captivity."

(vii.)
(viii.) for eternity.

[r]Blessed be Jehovah Elohim, the God of Israel,
who alone doeth [s]marvelous things!
And blessed be his glorious name for ever;
and let the [t]whole earth be filled with his glory.
[u]Amen and Amen.

The [v]prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.

r Ps. 41. 13. Ps. 89. 52. Ps. 106. 48.
s Ps. 77. 14.
t Is. 6. 3.
u Rev. 1.6,7.
v 2 Sam. 23. 1-7. *cf.* 1 Chr. 29. 25-28.

May the whole earth be filled with His glory! In this, as an eighth verse, there is perhaps an intimation of the overflow of this blessedness beyond the bounds of time and into the true eternity which, as we have seen, the Old Testament can hardly be said to enter. The double Amen is here appended to the prayer in testimony of the steadfast longing of the heart for it. The Lord takes it up as His "verily, verily," to make it the token of the steadfastness of the blessed truths with which He connects it, the assurance and rest of the heart which enters into them.

Does not this show us also the character of that final word which has been surely so much misunderstood by the great body of critics, who have shown in the way they have taken it up, how much they are critics of manuscripts—*biblio-technics*, if I may coin the word for them,—rather than judges of the spirit which pervades Scripture. What simpler way of reading the *end of David's prayers* than by comparison with the "*last words*," as we find them in the history? He even calls himself, there as here, "David the son of Jesse," and there also the "*sweet psalmist of Israel.*" And of what are his last words full! Of

"A righteous Ruler over men;
A Ruler in the fear of God;"

and then in some of the images which this very psalm suggests,—

"Even as the morning-light when the sun ariseth,
A morning without clouds:
From the brightness after rain
The herb springeth from the earth."

Nor did he speak with any thought of his mere human house; for he tells us directly that that house was "*not* so with God." Yet he speaks of "an eternal covenant" as to the future, "ordered in all, and sure;" and he adds: "for this is all my salvation and all of delight, though"—as yet in that sorrowful house that he had had, "He maketh it not to grow."

All David's heart then was wrapped up in that glorious prospect: the very same that he has shown us here! What wonder, then, that when he has poured his heart out in the contemplation of this glorious scene, he should express himself in this thankful ejaculation: "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended"! What more simple, heart-felt, and natural?

These are not, we may be sure, the words of a collector who thought he had got together in these first two books of the Psalms all that David had written, and *was mistaken.* This is but their mistake who have not learned that "the foolishness of God is wiser than man," and that "the Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain."

BOOK III.

The third book of the Psalms speaks, like Leviticus, of the sanctuary, and thus of God revealed in holiness. Hence, while we find in it, as before, Israel's deliverance in the latter days, it is constantly in view of this. Naturally in connection with this we have also Israel's history as a whole more entered upon: God is seen to have been consistent with it in all His dealings with them from the beginning.

The book is much smaller and less various in its range of subjects, having only seventeen psalms; eleven of which are ascribed to Asaph, being generally similar also to the fiftieth, which is the only other, and has been already before us. These psalms form the first subdivision of the book, and like those of the second book, are Elohistic, God (*Elohim*) being found in them, almost to the exclusion of Jehovah. This first subdivision consists also characteristically of "Remnant" psalms, while the last is predominantly Messianic. This conformity to the natural divisions, helps to confirm the authority of the titles, which has been disputed. The Asaphic psalms give us the holiness of God in grace toward Israel; the other six, the requirements of divine holiness met in Christ.

SUBD. 1.

The psalms of Asaph have again two sections: the first, of five psalms, gives the general principles; the second, of six psalms, their application to Israel's history.

Sec. 1.

The first psalm here (Ps. lxxiii.) shows, after the usual manner, the general character of the book. It speaks of the suffering of the righteous in contrast with the often seen prosperity of the ungodly,—a thing painful to consider, and hard to understand, until, in the sanctuary, in the presence of God, we find on the one hand the end of the wicked, and on the other that these sufferings are a discipline, the necessary result of the holiness of His nature with those who are ever with Him:—"for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness." Then the soul acquiesces with delight in its portion: holden by His right hand, guided by His counsel, what remains for us but Himself in heaven or earth?

The second psalm (lxxiv.) shows us this chastening rod for Israel—the enemy in the very sanctuary itself. At first sight, it looks as if God had entirely cast them off; but the enemy is so evidently God's enemy, that they realize He must finally appear against him. The adversary reproaches His name: can He give up into his hand the people He redeemed, yea, His own dwelling-place? His anger against them may be manifested in this rage of the enemy, but it cannot last. He will finally turn it against the oppressor, and break the rod He is using.

In the third psalm, the great day of manifestation is just at hand. All foundations may seem gone, but Messiah bears up the pillars of the earth. All is in the hands of God who puts down and sets up as He will. The horns of the wicked shall be cut off and the righteous shall be exalted.

In the fourth (Ps. lxxvi.), accordingly, all the might of the creature is prostrate before God. He shines out gloriously from the mountains of prey, where the weapons of war have been destroyed. God has arisen to judgment and for the deliverance of the meek; and the wrath of man is shown to praise Him, the rest of it being restrained.

While the fifth psalm (lxxvii.) gives the moral of all this, whatever the exercise of heart, to trust Him in the dark as in the light. His way is in the sea, and His footsteps oftentimes unseen; but His way all through is in the sanctuary also; and so, through storm and flame, He has, spite of all, led His people as a flock.

We must now look at these psalms in detail.

BOOK III. (Psalms lxxiii.–lxxxix.)

The holiness of God in His dealings with man.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Ps. lxxiii.–lxxxiii.)

Holiness in grace.

SECTION 1. (Ps. lxxiii.–lxxvii.)

The general principles.

Ps. lxxiii.

[1]PSALM LXXIII.

Consistency of divine holiness with the sufferings of the righteous.

A psalm of [w]Asaph.

1 (1-3): The question of this consistency. (i.) the principle. (ii.) conflict. (iii.) the meaning of the conflict.

TRULY God is [x]good unto Israel,
unto the [y]pure in heart.
But as for me, my feet were [z]almost gone;
my steps had well-nigh slipped.
For I was [a]envious of the boasters,
[when] I saw the [b]prosperity of the wicked.

2 (4, 5): The apparent contradiction as to the wicked. (i.) their peace. (ii.) their security.

For there are no [c]pangs to their death,
and their strength is well-fed.
They have not the [d]travail of mortal man,
nor are they stricken like [all] mankind.

3 (6-9): Their corruption. (i.) pride. (ii.) confirmed by prosperity. (iii.) manifested in their words. (iv.) their vanity.

Therefore [e]pride is as a chain about their neck:
violence covereth them as a [f]garment.
Their eyes stand out with [g]fatness:
they [h]out-do the imaginations of their heart.
They [i]scoff, and speak oppressively in malice:
they speak loftily.
They have set their [j]mouth in the heavens,
and their tongue goeth through the earth.

w Ps. 50. title. Ps. 74 to 83, titles.
x Ps. 34. 8. Ps. 119. 68.
y Ps. 32. 2. Matt. 5. 8.
z vers. 21, 22. *cf.* Ps. 94.18 with vers. 23, 24.
a Ps. 37. 1. Prov. 23. 17. Prov. 24. 1.
b Ps. 37. 35. Jer. 12. 1,2. Lk. 12. 16-21.
c Lk. 16. 19-22.
d Ps. 17. 10, 14. Job 21. 7-14.
e Jas. 5. 5. Am. 6. 1. Ps. 123. 4.
f *cf.* Ps. 109. 18. *ctr.* Col. 3. 12-14.
g De. 32. 15. Job 15. 27. *cf.* Lk.6.24, 25.
h *cf.* Eccl. 2. 1-10.
i *cf.* Ex. 5.2. *cf.* 1 Sa. 25. 10, 11.
j Ps. 12. 4. *cf.* Rev. 13. 5, 6.

PSALM LXXIII.

1. The question raised in the lxxiii. psalm is stated in the first three verses, "Truly God *is* good to Israel," the psalmist affirms; and then adds that, (according to the holiness of the divine nature,) this is "to the pure in heart." That is the truth; but it is not always easy to realize and maintain. *He* had not found it so: his feet had well-nigh gone, his steps slipped. The prosperity of the wicked, of which they had boasted, had moved him to envy of them; and the ways of God had darkened with him, as their lot seemed bright.

2. Indeed, to his eyes they seemed not merely no worse off than other men; much more than this, they were exceptionally peaceful and secure. Death threw no shadow over their lives. They were strong, comfortable and well-fed. The travail which besets the lives of men who are mortal because of sin, and accessible to all that that implies, did not trouble them. The strokes with which all mankind are smitten seemed not to fall upon them. Their circumstances justified apparently their boastings.

3. Yet this blessing blessed not: it only confirmed them in their evil. Pride they displayed, as if it were an ornament upon their necks, erect with self-consciousness. Their violence sought no concealment, but was like the garment upon them, manifest to all. Their insolent eyes stood out with fatness.

4 (10-14): The apostasy of the people through this.
(i.) license.
(ii.) the denial of God.
(iii.) the plea of success.
(iv.) with a vain opposite experience.
(v.) governmental ways.

5 (15-20): The government of God in the end of the wicked.
(i.) conviction.
(ii.) conflict.
(iii.) realization in the sanctuary.
(iv.) their fall.

Therefore his people [k]turn hither,
and waters to the full are drained by them.
And they say, [l]How doth God* know?
and is there knowledge in the Most High?
Behold, these are the wicked, and ever at [m]ease:
they increase in wealth.
Surely in [n]vain have I cleansed my heart,
and washed my hands in [o]innocence.
Even I, one [p]stricken all the day,
and chastened [q]every morning!

If I say, I will speak thus,
behold, I should be [r]faithless to the generation of thy children.
When I thought to know this,
it was [s]too hard for me,
Until I went into the [t]sanctuary of God,*—
[then] understood I their [u]end.
Truly, thou settest them in [v]smooth places:
thou castest them down to [w]destruction.

* El, "the Mighty."

k *cf.* Dan. 11. 35 with Matt. 24. 24.
l Job 22. 13. Ps. 59. 7.
m vers. 3-5.
n Job. 34. 9. Mal. 3. 14, 15. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 32.
o Ps. 26. 6.
p *cf.* Ps. 6. 1-3.
q Ps. 77. 1-4.
r *ctr.* Ps. 69. 6.
s *cf.* Eccl. 2. 15, 16.
t Ps. 77. 13. *cf.* 1 Sa. 16. 7.
u Prov. 16. 25. *cf.* Ps. 37. 37, 38. Phil. 3. 19.
v Ps. 35. 6. Jer. 23. 12.
w *cf.* Lk. 16. 22-26. *cf.* Ps. 11. 6 with 1 Thess. 5. 3.

They exceeded even their own imaginations of success. And this put them beyond bounds, making them scoff at the idea of being checked in the malicious thoughts they vented in violent words, as if above all other men: "they set their mouth in heaven," so lofty are they; "and their tongue goeth through the earth," as if they had possession of it all,—though this infatuation only made manifest their emptiness.

4. It was not only them whom their prosperity intoxicated. The effect of it was that people fell to them from among the professing people of God, who, encouraged by it, gave themselves up to license. For, they argued, how can God know? how can the Most High have any knowledge? Are not these confessedly the "wicked," whom He denounces? and yet, see how they live at ease, and their wealth increases? Of what use, then, is it to have cleansed my heart, and washed my hands in innocency, to live a life under the constant stroke of God, chastised every morning?

5. Alas, men might speak thus, who never knew what it was, really to be with Him! But if I joined them in this speech, says the psalmist, what injustice would I not be doing to the generation of Thy children! He speaks of Israel according to their birthright, for God had said, "Israel is my son, even my first-born," and the apostasy of others only leads to the realization that "they are not all Israel, that are of Israel;" therefore to the appropriation of this to a true remnant, though the Christian "Spirit of adoption" has not come.

He cannot go with these apostates; and yet his soul is in conflict. For a Jew with his covenanted blessings and the legal curses upon iniquity, hard indeed would it be, to understand this flourishing of the wicked, while the godly suffer, —a state of things not always simple to the Christian, who is taught to take up his cross and follow Christ. But if he does not understand, he draws nearer to God that he may do so. In the sanctuary of His presence the secret is disclosed: he sees the end that is coming for the wicked. The "smooth places" in which God sets them are not signs either of His favor or of His indifference. They are the prelude to an awful fall, which comes as in a moment, and they are brought to an end, consumed with terrors. Their prosperity, while it deceives them, is but the image of a dream, vanishing when men awake;—is but this, when the Lord arises and shows it as their folly and shame.

(v.) their end.

How are they desolate as in a [z]moment!
they are brought to an end, consumed with [y]terrors.

(vi.) the triumph over them.

As a [z]dream when one awaketh,
Lord, when thou arisest, thou [a]despisest their image.

6 (21-26): Disciplined.

(i.) independence.

When my heart [b]fermented,
and I was pricked in my reins,

(ii.) distance from God.

Then was I [c]brutish and ignorant:
I was a beast with thee.

(iii.) in the sanctuary.

But I am [d]continually with thee:
thou hast [c]holden my right hand.

(iv.) the way.

Thou wilt [f]guide me with thy counsel,
and afterwards in [g]glory thou wilt receive me.

(v.) man with God.

[h]Whom have I in the heavens [but thee?]
and there is none upon [i]earth that I desire beside thee.

(vi.) victory at the end.

My flesh and my heart [j]fail:
God is the [k]rock of my heart and my [i]portion for ever.

x cf. Lk. 12. 20. *cf.* Dan. 5. 30 with Prov. 29. 1.
y cf. Rev. 6. 15–17. Prov. 1. 24–28.
z cf. Is. 29. 7, 8. Ps. 78. 65.
a Ps. 2. 4. Ps. 37. 13.
b ctr. Ps. 45. 1.
c Ps. 92. 6. Ps. 94. 8. *cf.* Ps. 49. 20.
d cf. Heb. 13. 5, 6.
e cf. ver. 2 with Ps. 94. 18.
f Ps. 32. 8–10. Ps. 48. 14.
g Ps. 97. 11. Is. 4. 5.
h cf. Jno. 14. 2, 3. *cf.* Rev. 21. 23.
i cf. Gen. 15. 1. *j cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 16. *k* Ps. 27. 5. *l cf.* Ps. 16. 5.

6. The psalmist turns from this to deplore his own folly in his having been so moved as he had been by this short-lived triumph. He owns it as the ignorance of a beast who leaves out God. After all, he cannot, in the face of faith's record through all generations, take the circumstances of the life here as giving cause to doubt that God is with him: circumstances which would plead against the "generation of His children" in every age. And that one thing realized, that after all God is with him, is the controlling circumstance: it may well stand in the place of all other good. Is it not this also which will account for chastening and humiliation, the fruit of the holiness of Him who has come to walk with this poor creature of His? But support cannot be wanting either, in such a case; and so he owns: "But I am continually with Thee; Thou hast holden my right hand." From this the whole future may be certainly predicted; for God can be fully reckoned upon. The way will be with Him, and the end too with Himself: "Thou wilt guide me with Thy counsel; and afterwards in glory* Thou wilt receive me." The face to face vision of God has been for faith necessarily, in every generation and under every dispensation, the end—short of which complete satisfaction cannot be found. The cry in the Psalms from end to end is after God. After Him the soul longs and pants, as the hart after the water-brooks. Its question is continually: "When shall I come and appear before God?" Here this is quietly contemplated with the reassured confidence which is the end of all faith's exercises at all times. Here is the abiding joy, the source of all that can be: "whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee!" Nature may fail, but this failing strength only reveals the might of that "strength," which "is made perfect in weakness." "God is the rock of my heart, the foundation upon which it builds, and my portion forever."

7. The last two verses sum up finally the contrasted results for the righteous and the wicked: the way of independence which ends in destruction; the way

* It is to be acknowledged that the simplest translation of the text here would be, "after [the] glory Thou wilt receive me." The difficulty is as to the meaning of this. For though the acceptance and blessing of Israel as a nation will be when the Lord appears, and not before, yet the psalm is so individual in its character that it seems hard to apply it in this way. I do not discuss the point however, but leave it to the judgment of the reader with this acknowledgment. The translation, as given above, is accepted with slight modifications by Hebraists generally, the words in question being both treated as adverbial forms. As so translated, the national hope of Israel is not lost in what has larger meaning.

7 (27, 28): Summing up. (i.) the way of independence. (ii.) the way of dependence.

For lo, they that are far from thee shall [m]perish:
thou destroyest those that go wantonly from thee.
But as for me, it is [n]good for me to draw near to God:
I have put my [o]trust in the Lord Jehovah,
that I may [p]declare all thy works.

[m] Ps. 16. 4.
[n] Ps. 65. 4.
[o] *cf.* Ps. 16. 1.
[p] Ps. 26. 7.

Ps. lxxiv.

[2]PSALM LXXIV.

The enemy being God's enemy a plea for deliverance.

Maskil of Asaph.

1 (1-3): The cause of the cry. (i.) left solitary perpetually. (ii.) the plea of relationship.

WHY dost thou [q]cast [us] off, O God, [r]perpetually?
[why] doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?
Remember thine assembly which thou [s]purchasedst of old:
[which] thou hast redeemed [to be] the rod of thine [t]inheritance,—
mount Zion wherein thou hast dwelt.

[q] Ps. 44. 9, 23. Ps. 108. 11, 12.
[r] *cf.* Rom. 11. 1, 2, 15 with Is. 54. 7, 8. *cf.* Jer. 31. 37.
[s] Ex. 15. 16. 2 Sam. 7. 23. Neh. 1. 10. Is. 43. 1.
[t] De. 32. 9. Ps. 79. 1. Jer. 10. 16.

of dependence, in which already the goodness of drawing near to God is tasted; and in confidence, the ready tongue declares His works.

Psalm LXXIV.

In the second psalm of the Third Book we have the *enemy* in the sanctuary, and the destruction of that with which all blessing for the nation was connected, around which its religious life clustered and intertwined itself. Thus the desolation of the sanctuary was the casting off of the people of God,—the writing Lo-Ammi on them. It is difficult for us as Christians to put ourselves into the position of a man of that dispensation, where all spiritual blessings were sealed and symbolized to them by outward means. To say, "I am continually with Thee," was itself comparatively easy while Jehovah's tent was in their midst; but with the sanctuary desolated, how different would this be! Yet this might be used of God to bring the individual soul, after all, nearer to Him,—to make faith more fully aware of that personal link with Him which never could be broken. In Judaism, with all things right, the personal link founded itself upon and grew out of the corporate one. In Christianity, where things are right, the personal link is the foundation of all, and it is the union of those who believe which forms the body. The Judaized, ritualistic Christianity reverts to the old order, which was but probationary, and leaves the soul's personal interests secondary and doubtful. God, to bring His people into the blessings He designs for them, suffers the collapse of the Jewish system. That which was of course on the one hand the penalty of their national sins (and indeed apostasy), becomes in the mercy of God, through individual exercise and the conviction of legal unrighteousness, a wholesome and effective discipline for the remnant of His ancient people, who find their way to Him, not on the ground of the Jewish covenant, but as mere "sinners of the Gentiles." We have had their picture before us in the touching history of Ruth.

No wonder, therefore, that this is another Maskil psalm,—a special "instruction" for Israel in the last days; although it needs for full understanding to be put in connection with the thirty-second psalm, which as the first of these *maskilim* is the beginning of all true intelligence, and in living relation to them all. (See *Notes.*)

1. The psalm begins with a cry to God, as thus (as a people) abandoned by Him. They are—not "forever," as if they were predicting the future, but "perpetually," that is, as a matter of day by day experience,—forsaken of Him. They beseech Him, as it were, to "lift His feet," that is to come and look at these perpetual desolations: they are indeed the terrible and demonstra-

(iii.) the forsaken sanctuary.

Lift up thy steps to the perpetual ruins:
everything hath the enemy [u] broken to pieces in the sanctuary.

2 (4-9): The enemy's work.

Thine adversaries roar in the [v] midst of thy place of assembly:
they set up their [w] signs as signs.

(i.) their signs as signs.

It looked as if they lifted up [z] axes in a thicket of trees.

(ii.) mere destruction.

And now all the [y] carved work thereof together
with hatchets and hammers they break down.

(iii.) the profanation.

They have set on [z] fire thy sanctuary:
they have profaned to the ground the dwelling-place of thy [a] name.

(iv.) cast to the ground.

[u] *cf.* 1 Ki. 19. 10.
[v] *cf.* Lam. 2. 7.
[w] *cf.* Dan. 9. 27. *cf.* Matt. 24. 15 with Rev. 13. 14, 15. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 4.
[x] *ctr.* Judg. 6. 25.
[y] *cf.* 1 Ki. 6. 18, 29, 32, 35
[z] 2 Ki. 25. 9. Is. 64. 11.
[a] *cf.* 1 Ki. 9. 8. *cf.* Lk. 13. 35. *cf.* Matt. 24. 1, 2.

tive proof of their abandonment; for they are the ruins of His own dwelling-place among them. But who could have accomplished this, so long as He owned it as that in any wise? how impossible for an enemy to prevail against God!

But they are "the sheep of His pasture," whom He has thus forsaken! Not that by this is meant to assert any righteousness on their part. It is not that they have been tractable, docile, obedient to government: who could assert this for them? No, it is privilege that they are thinking of,—of His provision for them; of that into which He had brought them, little as they might have responded to His care. They were His assembly, His in a relationship which Himself had formed with them: for *He* had purchased them, *He* had redeemed them: whatever *they* might be, would the unrepenting One deny His work! He had chosen Zion and dwelt there: could He altogether forsake it?

Thus we see that there is no self-righteousness in this plea that is made with God. It is really founded on that covenant name, Jehovah, though this does not, with good reason, appear. But in the power of that name it was that He redeemed them out of Egypt at the first. He will be true to it: He will act according to His own nature, not as if He repented, or changed because men changed. And this ground taken is really that of grace—of the thirty-second psalm—of purchase and redemption, which implies the putting away of sin.

2. But the psalmist goes on to picture the enemy's work in all its desperate profanity as against God. Not the least sign was there of fear, or of regard: "Thine adversaries roar in the midst of Thy place of assembly." There is worse abomination: there, where the tokens have been seen of the worship of the true God only, "they set up their signs as signs." "By 'signs,'" says Delitzsch, "we must not understand military insignia; the scene of the Temple and the supplanting of the Israelite's national insignia to be found there, by the substitution of other insignia, requires that the word should have the religious reference in which it is used of circumcision and of the Sabbath (Ex. xxxi. 13); such heathen 'signs' which were thrust upon the Temple and congregation of Jehovah as henceforth the lawful ones were those which are set forth in 1 Macc. i. 45–49, and more particularly the so-called 'abomination of desolation' mentioned in verse 54 of the same chapter." The application therefore to the time of the end, to which all these psalms look forward, is evident.

Mere malice seems to guide the hands and strengthen the arms of the invaders of the holy places. They seem like men leveling trees in a thicket; but no, it is the carved work of the sanctuary which is ruthlessly demolished with axes and hammers. Then they set it on fire and burn it profanely to the ground. And this flame spreads far and wide throughout the land against every place of gathering that owns the Name of the "Mighty One," thus assailed by the pitiful weak arms of men His creatures.

And who knows the limit? There is no prophet any more: there is none

(v.) the weak with the Mighty!

(vi.) the limit.

3 (10, 11): Glorify Thy Name. (i.) in view of the rebellion. (ii.) prepare to strike.

4 (12-17): Nature yielding to God: experiences. (i.) God the eternal King. (ii.) the cleaving of the sea and defeat of the enemy.

They have said in their [b]heart, Let us make havoc of them together:
they have burned up all God's* places of assembly in the [c]land.
We see not our signs; there is no more any [d]prophet,
nor is there among us one who knoweth [e]how long.

How long, O God, shall the adversary [f]reproach?
shall the enemy perpetually treat with scorn [g]thy name?
Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy [h]right hand?
get it ready from inside thy bosom!

And God is my King of [i]old:
working [j]deliverances in the midst of the earth.
Thou didst in thy might [k]cleave asunder the sea:
thou [l]brakest the heads of the monsters on the waters.

b Ps. 83. 4. Ps. 53. 1.
c *cf.* Matt. 4. 23. *cf.* Matt. 24. 21.
d *cf.* 1 Sa. 3. 1. *cf.* 1 Sa. 28. 6, 15. *cf.* Am. 8. 11, 12.
e Ps. 6. 3, etc.
f Ps. 44. 13. Ps. 79. 4.
g *cf.* Is. 37. 4.
h Ex. 15. 6. *cf.* Lam. 2. 3.
i De. 32. 7. Ps. 44. 4.
j Ex. 14. 13. Ex. 15. 2.
k Ex. 14. 21. Is. 63. 12.
l Is. 27. 1. Is. 51. 9, 10. Ezek. 29. 3-5.

* El.

who knows how long. But here the extremity of evil rouses afresh the appeal to God, who does know.

3. He must appear; He must vindicate Himself, for His name is openly reproached. The fool scoffs at it; and though he show himself by this a "fool," yet how can God suffer it? "Why withdrawest Thou Thy hand?" aye, "Thy right hand?" why is the blow, which seems so often about to fall, so constantly delayed? "Get it ready from inside Thy bosom!"

4. The psalmist now goes back to the history of old, to comfort himself with the experience of God's wonders in behalf of the people, when He led them out of Egypt into this very land, where now so terrible a calamity has fallen upon them. "For God is my King of old," he says, "working deliverances in the midst of the earth,"—there where the eyes of men would be most upon them. Egypt, of which he goes on to speak, was such a place; and the haughty king of it was just the person in whom God could make His power known, and declare His name throughout all the earth. "Thou didst in Thy might cleave asunder the sea: Thou brakest the heads of the monsters on the waters. Thou brakest the heads of leviathan* in pieces: and gavest him for food to a people,—dwellers in the desert." These last, spite of the objection that the word used only conveys the thought of animals of the desert, surely refers to Israel; to whom, though for a time only dwellers in the wilderness, their enemies became a spoil. Similarly, Caleb and Joshua speak of the Canaanites afterwards: "they shall be food for us" (Num. xiv. 9); and the words "to a people" seem to be put to guard us from the usual meaning. Delitzsch urges the application of "a people" to the ants in Prov. xxx. 25; but the figurative use is there quite plain, while here it would have no meaning. Israel's difficulties only become God's opportunities; their adversaries only furnish them with food: "happy are the people that are in such a case!" but so it is with all the people of God.

The experiences of the onward way are given only in two instances, in some sort evidently contrasted with each other, and chosen on that account, to show nature's various acting under the power of God. In the first instance in the presence of human need, a "place of springs and brooks" is cleft in the flinty rock, and the people are nourished from the barren breast of the desert. In the

* The crocodile, often the symbol of Egypt. "Leviathan" is from *levi*, "joined," referring to its scales, and *than*, almost the same as the word for "monsters," *tannin*, in the previous verse.

(iii.) made their portion.

Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces,
and gavest him for food to a people—
dwellers in the [m]desert.

(iv.) on the way.

Thou didst [n]cleave a place of springs and brooks:
thou [o]driedst up never-failing rivers.

(v.) the ordered government of "God with us."

Thine is the [p]day, thine also is the night:
thou hast prepared luminary and [q]sun.

(vi.) the limits, His.

Thou hast [r]fixed all the limits of the land:
[s]summer and autumn, *thou* hast arranged them.

m De. 32.10.
n Ex.17. 5,6. Is. 48. 21.
o Josh. 3.13-17. Ps.114. 3, 5.
p cf. Jer. 31. 35-37. *cf.* Jer. 33. 20-25.
q Ps. 19. 2-4.
r De. 32. 8.
s Gen. 8. 22.

other case the impetuous Jordan—no winter-torrent merely, and at its flood-tide—is dammed back and dries up. The long journey ends with the same display of power with which it had begun.

From these special interventions of God in history, the psalmist passes on to His general and orderly government in creation. Israel's God is the Creator; and His general government is in harmony with His gracious relationship to His people. The stars in their courses fight against Sisera, and all things work together for good to them that love Him. And yet no less does He make His sun to rise upon the evil and upon the good, and send His rain upon the just and unjust. These things are, of course, in no wise contradictory, for it is unbelief itself which makes that which otherwise would be blessing turn to its very opposite. So Christ in the world, in fashion as a man, was fullest, richest blessing for every one, the source of all blessing: yet men stumbled over Him, and to that, says the apostle, (1 Pet. ii. 8,) "they were appointed." There can be no blessing for faith, but unbelief will stumble over it. In the nature of things, faith and unbelief being contraries, there can be nothing that shall be blessing for faith, but unbelief shall take it for the opposite; and He who appoints, therefore, the blessing for faith, appoints thereby the stumbling-block for unbelief. How terrible a thing is sin, then!

But to know that our Father is the Lord of heaven and earth, what unspeakable joy! The day and the night are His alike; and the night unveils a peopled heavens, which even the glory of the day, as that, shuts out. So it has been for us spiritually, as we know. The very going down of Eden glory has but been the occasion of the display of manifold glory. And for us all the night of sorrow has revealed the luminaries with which God has lighted it. For us the day comes only with the sun: it is not earth-manufacture but heaven's gift.

The next verse, according to its number, speaks of *limits*. In a world of contraries, and of perpetual conflict, what need for One who shall put limits to this. The limits of the land itself are in this way fixed by God, and a little knowledge of physical geography will teach us its importance. Compare land-locked Siberia, with its mountains cutting off the south, and the countries laved by the currents from the equator. And this therefore, is intimately connected with that "arrangement" of summer and autumn, so necessary to man's subsistence. When the expected time of blessing for the earth shall come, it may take but an extra throe of earth-quake to send man's wheat-harvests far up towards the pole!*

Thank God, these physical limits are but signs of power in His hand used in other than material things to restrain and bound; and so we are to read them.

5. From this the psalm goes on to appeal to this strong and stable government of God for recompense to those that are His adversaries as well as theirs,—theirs even on His account. The occasion calls for His intervention now. It is Jeho-

* The coal-beds of the polar regions, and even the name of "Greenland" are witness to a very different climate once in those ice-bound tracts. And it was Lyell's belief, with which many have expressed their concurrence, that a different arrangement of sea and land would suffice to account for so great a difference as that between its present condition and the subtropical one argued by the presence of coal and coral.

5 (18-23): Recompense!

(i.) the occasion.

(ii.) give not up Thy people.

(iii.) their refuge.

(iv.) the plea of the poor.

(v.) the end reached.

(vi.) conquer!

Remember this, that an enemy hath [t]reproached Jehovah,
and that a [u]foolish people hath treated with scorn thy name.
Give not up thy [v]turtle-dove to a community* of sensual men:
forget not the community* of thine afflicted ones [w]perpetually.
Have respect unto the [x]covenant:
for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of [y]violence.
O let not the oppressed return [z]ashamed:
let the poor and needy praise thy name!
Arise, O God! [a]plead thine own cause!
remember how the fool reproacheth thee all the day!
[b]Forget not the voice of thine adversaries!
the tumult of those that rise against thee ascendeth continually.

t vers.10, 22.

u *cf.* De.32.6. Ps. 39. 8.

v *cf.* Song 2. 14. *cf.* Hos. 7. 11 with Hos. 11. 11.

w Ps. 77. 7. ver. 1.

x Gen. 17. 7. Ex. 2. 24. Is. 55. 3. *cf.* Gal. 3.15–18 with Rom. 11.29.

y Ps. 55. 9. *ctr.* Is. 60. 18.

z Ps. 25. 2.

a Is. 3. 13. Mi. 6. 2.

b Ps. 89. 50, 51. Ps. 9. 12.

* *Chajath*, as in lxviii. 10: literally, a "living creature"; but used for a "troop, company," also: a body of people, as it were, inspired with one spirit, living one life. It must surely be translated alike in the two parts of one verse, and in measure is so in the common version; the revised, with most, disconnects them by rendering them "wild beast" and "life." With the rendering I have given, however, the *nephesh* following, usually rendered "soul," is better taken as qualifying *chajath*, (which is in the construct,) and like the similar ψυχικὸς of the New Testament, Jas. iii. 15; Jude 19.

vah Himself whom the enemy reproaches! it is that glorious and terrible Name that the fool scorns and defies. Then with Israel's Redeemer the psalmist pleads that it is His turtle-dove—defenceless, and as far as the enemy is concerned, innocent—that is in danger. Can He give it up to men inspired in common only by their lusts?—His community, now in a common condition, indeed, in their affliction: can they be perpetually forgotten?

Their hope, their refuge, still could be the "covenant." Not, indeed, that terrible legal one which they had violated, and which pleaded only against them; but rather that, back centuries before Sinai, and which in its sign of circumcision spoke of the incapacity of the flesh to accomplish anything towards the fulfilment of the divine promise. Like their father Abraham, with his "body now dead, when he was about a hundred years old," they could still believe in the God of resurrection, and fall back upon that "covenant of promise" given, when as yet there was no law to saddle it with conditions (Gal. iii. 15–17). Thus in all their forlorn state they could rise to be truly children of their father Abraham; and the divine mercy had here foreseen and provided for the destitution and helplessness in which they are now found. "How good is the God we adore!"

Though, therefore, in the darkened earth, the habitations of violence are everywhere round about, their need shall be an effectual plea with One able to show Himself fully out to such humbled ones. They can plead that the oppressed shall not turn back ashamed,—that the poor and needy shall be made to praise His Name. And again that brings back the realization of how the fool is scoffing at it. Let Jehovah plead, then, His own cause, and remember these reproaches, in which surely in divine government the end must be reached. The tumult of rebellion rising up continually to heaven challenges the power of God to show itself supreme above it.

Ps. lxxv.

[3]PSALM LXXV.

Christ the Interpreter of God in the day of manifestation.

To the chief musician: cAl-tashcheth; a psalm of Asaph, a song.

1 (1-5): Christ the King.
(i.) power bringing in the day.
(iii.) the Servant Ruler.
(iii.) the re-establishment.

UNTO thee we give [d]thanks, O God, we give thanks:
and thy name is [e]near:
thy wondrous [f]works declare [it.]
For I will take the [g]set time;
I will judge [h]uprightly.
The [i]earth and all its inhabitants are dissolved:
I set up its pillars. Selah.

c Ps.57,title.
d *cf.* Ps. 22. 22. *cf.* Ps. 65.1, 2.
e Is. 50. 8. Is. 51. 5.
f Ps. 19. 1.
g Ps. 102. 13.
h Ps. 45. 7.
i *cf.* Is. 24. 19-23.

Psalm LXXV.

The seventy-fifth psalm is the announcement of the divine answer to this prayer, presently to be given in the day of manifestation; and Christ is the Interpreter of God, upon the throne of the world,—the anti-typical Joseph of days near to come. The psalm is easily understood as "a psalm of Asaph," and "a song." The *Al-tashcheth* "Destroy not," which we have had also in the title of Psalm lviii, I cannot apply with any more certainty here than there.

The ten verses of the psalm divide into two sections of five verses each; in the first of which Christ, whose voice is heard throughout the whole, anticipates the kingdom that is to be His at the appointed time. In the second we find Him as the "faithful Witness," the Representative of God on earth, testifying for God: as Judge exalting and abasing, according to grace and holiness alike. But His heart is only manifest in blessing, and the heart of the saved goes forth to Him in joy and praise.

1. Accordingly in the first verse, as the connection with the second shows, He it is who is the Leader of Israel's praise. The name of God is near: that is, it is going to be displayed. The wondrous works of His hand are what shall declare it. During all this time, God has been declaring His name in the grace of the gospel, but men at large will not hear: "Let favor (or grace) be shown to the wicked," says the prophet, "yet will he not learn uprightness;" "when Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness (Isa. xxvi. 9, 10). The gospel dispensation therefore passes away, and with it the day of man: the day of the Lord follows, putting in the dust the glory of man, and forcing his reluctant ear to hear.

Messiah now speaks alone:——

"For I will take the set time," He says: "*I* will judge uprightly." The common version has "when I shall receive the *congregation;*" but the word, though capable of this, is the regular one for Israel's "seasons" or "appointed times," and has here the deepest significance. The typical Ruler among men is Himself the obedient One, and as such speaks in the gospel of Mark,—the gospel of the Servant,—as not knowing this "time." "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels that are in heaven, *neither the Son*, but the Father" (Mark xiii. 32). It is as the Son in service, that He speaks here, and thus the words are omitted in the parallel place in Matthew: for (as His own words are) "the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth." In this character, His Father's will is (as it were) not His business: He waits until His enemies are made His footstool. When the appointed hour has struck, He takes it and comes forth: the perfect Servant still, to do the will of God upon the throne now, as He has waited upon it hitherto.

Thus, indeed, will He "judge uprightly." He has not a separate interest to divert Him from it,—not a thought that is not in harmony with the divine mind. And so, if the earth be in dissolution with its corruption,—men's hearts away from God, and therefore at strife with one another, He can set up again its pillars in truth and righteousness. Thus the license given to vanity is

(iv.) prostration of the vain-doers. (v.) man before God.

2 (6-10): His testimony in separating judgment. (i.) barren resources. (ii.) the diverse judgment of God.

I said unto the boasters, [j]Boast not:
and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn.
Lift not up your horn on high:
speak not with an [k]impudent neck.

For not from the east,
and not from the west,
and not from the south, is [l]exaltation:
For God it is that judgeth:
he [m]abaseth one and exalteth another.

j Ps. 52. 1. *cf.* Dan. 7. 25-27.

k cf. Ezek. 2. 3, 4.

l cf. 1 Sa. 2. 7, 8.

m cf. Jer. 27. 6. *cf.* Dan. 2. 21. *cf.* Dan. 4. 37.

at an end: "I have said,"—using the prophetic style of anticipation,—"I have said unto the boasters, Boast not; and to the wicked, Lift up not your horn." Man out of his creature place, exalting himself, has led to all the misery in the world. How perfect is the rebuke of it by the One who took up obedience voluntarily in a world which disobedience had ruined, by this to redeem it!

The next verse, though it be so similar, carries this to its necessary issue; and observe with what definite precision the numerical structure emphasizes the point here. The previous verse, as the fourth, simply speaks of the frailty and vanity of this poor creature, boasting himself to be what he is not. The present, as a fifth, shows him in relation to *God*, and thus points out his lifting his horn *on high* (comp. Ps. vii. 7; lxviii. 18),—his exalting himself against God, and his impudent neck. And this, let us remember, is shown out in the fullest way in the man of sin, the wicked one, whom at the very time that He comes forth, "the Lord shall consume with the breath" (not "spirit") "of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thess. ii. 8).

Thus Christ the Lord, then, comes into His kingdom.

2. Now we have His testimony, given in judgment, discriminating and diverse, to destruction or to exaltation, from this throne which He is taking. And first of all, as is clear, the people for whom He interferes is addressed: "For not from the east," ("the going forth" of the sun,) "and not from the west," ("the place of evening,") "and not from the wilderness," (which lay south of the land,) "is exaltation." The position of Israel is most plainly marked here, at the time of the attack of the king of the *north* upon Jerusalem (Dan. xi. 45). The north, therefore, is not mentioned, because from the north there is no hope. In other directions help might possibly be found; but in fact it is not coming from any point of the compass. *God* is coming in: "for God it is that judgeth; He abaseth one and exalteth* another."

But who will be able to stand when God comes in? All the earth will be consumed with the fire of His jealousy: "for a cup is in Jehovah's hand, and the wine foameth: it is full of mixture, and He poureth out of the same; surely the dregs of it,"—that which remains for the last, and is the strongest part,—"shall all the wicked of the earth drain off and drink." It is the day of wrath and of the ban upon iniquity,—the day which abases all the pride of man. Abasement one can understand, but how can there be "exaltation?" and is it not written: "the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day?"

Ah, but when the Lord is exalted, all His character must be exalted. If this be the day of the manifestation of His Name, judgment alone can surely not manifest it. Judgment is the strange work to which He is forced, but where He is free to express what is in His heart—what then?

Here then the voice of Christ breaks out into distincter utterance. He must not leave it for a moment doubtful with what the joy of His soul links itself.

* This word, so often recurring in different forms in this connection (*tarimu*, 4, 5; *marom*, 5; *harim*, 6; *jarim*, 7) is the key to the meaning of verse 6, which the Septuagint, Targum, Syriac, and Vulgate, with Delitzsch, Moll, Cheyne, etc. translate "not from the desert of the *mountains*" (*harim*). The verse in this case would be abruptly broken off.

(iii.) His holiness displayed.

For a [n]cup is in Jehovah's hand, and the wine foameth:
it is full of mixture, and he poureth out of the same:
surely the [o]dregs of it shall all the wicked of the earth drain off [and] drink.

(iv.) the God of Jacob.

But *I* will [p]declare for ever:
I will psalm unto the God of Jacob.

(v.) recompense.

And all the horns of the wicked will I cut off:
the horns of the [q]righteous shall be exalted.

[n] Ps. 60. 3. *cf.* Is. 51. 17. *cf.* Jer. 25. 15-29.
[o] *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 18.
[p] *cf.* Ps. 26. 7.
[q] Ps. 89. 17, 24. Ps. 148. 14.

Ps. lxxvi.

[s]PSALM LXXVI.

The prostration of the creature.

To the chief musician, on stringed instruments: a psalm of Asaph, a song.

1 (1-3): The reign of peace begun. (i.) God known. (ii.) in relationship.

IN [r]Judah is God known:
his [s]name is great in Israel.
In Salem also is his [t]tabernacle:
and his dwelling-place in Zion.

[r] Ps. 48. 1.
[s] *cf.* Ezek. 36. 21-24.
[t] Ps. 78. 67, 68. Is. 4. 3-6.

If the shepherd's rod has beaten down the enemy, there are sheep of His in whose behalf He has acted, and a people with whom that God whom He represents has linked His Name: "But I will declare forever," He says; "I will psalm unto the God of Jacob." Here is a people whose God He is not ashamed to declare Himself. Who, then, is this Jacob? and what is he, that such a portion should be his? Nay, his name speaks of nothing but what is poor and lowly; it speaks not of strength but of weakness. More than this, it speaks of sinfulness; not merely of the weakness of the creature, but of a *fallen* creature. It speaks of one with whom God had had to strive and to cripple him, and put him into the place of weakness, that, no longer striving but clinging, he might have "power over the angel and prevail," and acquire that new name "Israel" in which his new link with God could be expressed.

For there is a strange power with God in human weakness, and He who is the Creator has a marvelous respect unto His creature, just in that place of creature. Nor does sin itself affect this, when only the arms of conscious need are flung upwards towards God. Notice again that this is just what the numerical structure once more emphasizes here, the creature weakness which, even in his craft, makes itself felt in him. And this name he must own, to get the blessing: "and he said, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel." He must acknowledge the name first, that he may lose it. And yet God delights to recall it still, and link Himself with it, and as here, be called the "God of Jacob." And this is the Name that Messiah now declares, and which He celebrates in psalm—that is, making all nature sympathize with Him. And this as the King in glory.

Righteous and wicked get thus a definition here. The nature of God is not sacrificed, but shown out in His grace; and the work of the Mediator in its necessity and power for men; while still the government of God is maintained in its eternal principles: "All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off; and the horns of the righteous shall be exalted."

Psalm LXXVI.

Thus, then, for blessing, man has to be put down into the place of need. With God's judgments upon the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness. We see, therefore, the need of what this psalm presents to us, which naturally follows, also, the one before it. As a psalm of divine government, manifestly exercised, it has the regular 12 verses, and with the regular division also, into four sections of 3 verses each; for there is plainly nothing to disturb

(iii.) peace realized.

There [u]brake he the flashings of the bow,—
shield, and sword, and battle. Selah.

2 (4-6): The humiliation of the warrior.
(i.) the Light shining.
(ii.) the defeat of the foe.

Thou art [v]shining forth, glorious,
above the mountains of prey.
The [w]stout-hearted are spoiled;
they have drowsed into their [x]sleep:
and none of the valiant men have found their hands.

(iii.) the sanctuary-refuge.

At thy [y]rebuke, O God of Jacob,
both chariot and horse are cast into a deep sleep.

3 (7-9): Wrath revealed from heaven.
(i.) the resistless wrath of God,
(ii.) discriminative,
(iii.) and holy.

Thou—thou art to be [z]feared:
and who can stand before thee, when thou art [a]angry?
Thou didst make judgment heard from the [b]heavens;
the earth feared, and was [c]still,
When God arose to judgment,
to save all the [d]meek of the earth. Selah.

u Ps. 46. 9. *cf.* Is. 2. 4. Ezek. 39. 9.
v *cf.* Is. 63. 1-6.
w *cf.* Ex. 15. 9.
x *cf.* Is. 37. 8-13, 33-36.
y Ps. 80. 16. Is. 66. 15, 16.
z Am. 3. 8. Jer. 10. 6, 7.
a *cf.* Ps. 2. 12. Nah. 1. 6.
b Ps. 50. 1-4.
c Ps. 46. 10. Hab. 2. 20.
d Ps. 22. 26. Matt. 5. 5.

this. Again, it is a psalm of Asaph, and a song, which the stringed instruments accompany, for the earth is now tuned and ready for its Maker's praise.

1. The first section shows us the inauguration of the reign of peace. God is known in Judah, the worshiper-tribe, and His Name is great in Israel. The once-divided kingdom is now impliedly united and at rest, in obedience to Him whom so to serve brings into harmony with all His universe.

And thus there is relationship between Him and His people never to be disturbed. His tabernacle is at Salem, Jerusalem gone back to the meaning of its older name as Melchizedek's city—"Peace." Another Melchizedek now rules in her, "Priest of the Most High God" in full reality, and in Zion is His "fixed" abode (*meonatho*), "His rest." And because He is to be at rest, He has broken up all the instruments of war together: the "flashings"—the arrows flashing from—"the bow," the shield and the sword, and all that makes up war.

2. Never will war have been more pronounced, more deadly, than in that last spasm in which it expires. As we think of the diligent perfecting of the machinery of it now, which leaves the old "flashings" of the bow to be but the types of its far-reaching artillery, how good it is to think of its collapse which is impending when the Prince of peace makes war upon war! Serene, beautiful, like the breaking forth of morning at the end of a night of storm, the glory of the Lord shines forth there where all had been but the prey of the spoiler hitherto. The "mountains of prey" are not any indefinite allusion to the fastnesses of robbers generally, but Jerusalem itself, the city of so many sieges, the constant "prey" of the enemy. The contrast expressed (for which the "more than" of the common version is inadequate) is between the city in its recent awful desolation, and the Light that now enfolds and glorifies her, wrapping all her dwellings in its bright, yet chastened lustre (Isa. iv. 5). The new day is come, that shall have no decline, the "morning without clouds" of prophetic vision (2 Sam. xxiii. 4).

On the other hand, night is fallen upon the children of night. Like nocturnal birds of prey, the morning has sealed their eyes, and sunk them in helpless sleep from which there is no waking. It was the necessary doom of such as they were.

But there is another reason: and here we have the assurance, once again, of the grace which can consist with holiness. It is the *God of Jacob* who has thrown His arms around the feeble objects of their attack. And here, notice, it is *chariot and horse* upon which sleep has fallen. The enemies find their doom

4 (10–12): The prostrate earth, (i.) in these almighty hands, (ii.) may do Him service, (iii.) to whom it manifestly belongs.

For the [e] wrath of man praiseth thee:
the remainder of wrath thou [f] restrainest.
Vow and [g] pay unto Jehovah your God:
let all that are round about him bring [h] presents
unto him that ought to be feared.
He [i] cutteth off the spirit of princes:
he is [j] terrible to the kings of the earth.

e *cf.* Ex. 14. 17. *cf.* Phil. 1. 12–18.
f *cf.* Gen. 31. 24. *cf.* Dan. 6. 22.
g *cf.* Ps. 61. 5.
h Ps. 72. 10.
i Mi. 5. 9.
j Ps. 66. 5.

Ps. lxxvii.

[5] PSALM LXXVII.

God's way in the sea and in the sanctuary.

To the chief musician, to [k] Jeduthun, a psalm of Asaph.

k Ps. 39, 62, tities.

1 (1–3): The occasion of question. (i.) at peace. (ii.) conflict, though dependent.

MY [l] voice is unto God, and I cry:
my voice is unto God, and he hath given ear unto me.
In the day of my [m] strait I sought the Lord:
my hand was [n] stretched out in the night, and slackened not:
my soul [o] refused to be comforted.

l Ps. 3. 4.
m Ps. 50. 15.
n Ps. 130. 1–6. Ps. 143. 6.
o *cf.* Jer. 31. 15.

because of what they are: here it is simply the means of attack that fail, because God has sheltered His people.

3. In the next section, therefore, it is God Himself who is before the soul: but God revealed in judgment, which is openly manifested from heaven, in omnipotent, discriminative, holy wrath. His power is such that He must needs be feared: who can stand before Him, when He is angry? His judgment is discriminative, as the word used here (*din*) implies: wise, therefore, and searching, and recognized by the still awe of earth. It is holy, also, for it is in behalf of the meek of the earth, for whose salvation God at last, after long patience, rises up.

4. The fourth section shows the earth entirely in His hands. So complete is His government of it, that the wrath of man, which has just been at its wildest, nevertheless praises Him. Whatever could not be made to do this He could not permit to be. Men are bidden therefore to vow and pay their vows to Him who is the Eternal and their God; and to bring presents in sign of their subjection to Him who is truly to be feared. For that to Him it belongs is plain by His judgment of its kings, just now executed. "He cutteth off the spirit of princes: He is terrible to the kings of the earth."

PSALM LXXVII.

The last psalm of the series gives us that character of the divine government which causes it to be so fruitful of exercise to the soul of man. Even for the Christian, in this respect, clouds and darkness are about Him still; the revolving wheel of the world, with all its remorselessness of change for the fleeting generations, is yet God's chariot wheel, as indeed the Preacher sees it, only to the increase of his perplexity; and the height of the wheel—so high as to be dreadful, in Ezekiel's vision,—hides with its mystery Him who sits above it. This is what this fifth psalm here presents: God's footsteps in the sea, and there unknown, with the difficulty for faith engendered by it;—a difficulty pressing for solution, or at least some answer; and which is here answered, measurably at least. It could not yet have the settlement which Christianity has given to it, nor can there be settlement, even with this, which shall leave us with no more exercise of this kind. Faith must still reckon with the unseen, in some sense, as Asaph did; and the psalm will have its use still for every pilgrim. Comforting it is, too, to note that it is for Jeduthun, i. e. "the worshiper," and that it is, notably also, a sanctuary-psalm. If God's way is in the sea, His steps unknown, it is no less in the sanctuary also, in the holiness which must be His, and it is

(iii.) remembrance of God.

I remembered God, and I [p]moaned:
I complained, and my spirit was [q]overwhelmed.
Selah.

[p] Ps. 42. 4,5.
[q] Ps. 142. 3. Ps. 143. 4.

2 (4-6): Conflict.
(i.) held to the question.
(ii.) history.

Thou hast held mine [r]eyelids open:
I am so agitated, that I cannot speak.
I have considered the [s]days of old,—
the years of ancient times.

[r] *cf.* Lam. 2. 11.
[s] Ps. 143. 5. Is. 51. 9.

(iii.) memories.

I [t]remember my music in the night:
I [u]commune with my heart,
and my spirit made diligent search.

[t] Ps. 42. 4, 8.
[u] Ps. 4. 4.

3 (7-10): Interpretation and solution.
(i.) for ever?

Will the Lord [v]cast off for ever?
and will he show favor no more?

[v] Ps. 44. 9, 23.

from what is known of Him—changeless as He is in nature,—that what is unknown must be determined.

The psalm, as it is a fifth, so it has five parts, the first three of which are taken up with the problem and its solution, while the last two expand the general thought of it, as we have seen.

1. In the first part we have the occasion of the question, but with the preliminary assurance that the psalmist's cry to God has been answered: "My voice is unto God, and I cry: my voice is unto God, and He hath given ear to me." He then points out how the question which was troubling had risen for him. External difficulty it was that (as commonly) produced the inward perplexity. We are apt to take with calmness enough the difficulties of others, until these become our own: as Eliphaz said to Job, "it toucheth *thee*, and thou art troubled." So here: "in the day of my strait I sought the Lord"—not Jehovah, but the Almighty Ruler of all: "my hand was stretched out in the night and slacked not: my soul refused comfort." The remembrance of God also only made the distress more poignant, for here it was that doubt was assailing him: "I remembered God, and I moaned; I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed." We have not as yet, however, the special character of this distress made known.

2. In the second section we realize more the nature of the conflict, as having to do with questions which, as Ecclesiastes has it, "God has given to the sons of men to be exercised with." "Thou hast held mine eyelids open," he says: "I am so agitated that I cannot speak." He is occupied with the history of man, with "the days of old,—the years of ancient times"—God's dealings with men are exercising him; and from these he turns to review his own experience. He remembers his "music in the night," but he is not disposed to music now. He is busy, communing with his own heart, and his spirit making diligent search. But with all this, at present, rest is not attained.

3. The next section brings us however to the interpretation of it all. We find the riddle and its solution also. We see clearly that it is a question which Israel is above all concerned with, and which a latter-day remnant would certainly be exercised about; while the answer concerns His people at all times, it being the assertion of the faithfulness of God to His own Name, for which He ever acts, and in which they find their resource and refuge.

The question is: "Will the Lord cast off forever? and will He show favor no more?" Here the "Lord" is not "Jehovah;" nor is the covenant-Name mentioned until after this question is answered. Covenant they cannot plead: the answer has to come from what God is in Himself, not from relationship, which is the very thing in question. But the "Lord" (*Adonai*). He in whose hand all power is, has in effect cast off when that power no more acts in their behalf. Will He cast off, then, "forever" (*leolamim*, "for the ages")? "and will He show favor no more?" There was no doubt, at least, of what He had been to them. Could

(ii.) His love and word.
(iii.) Himself.
(iv.) but human weakness.

Is his loving-kindness come to a [w]perpetual end?
hath his word [x]failed for all generations?
Hath the Mighty One [y]forgotten to be gracious?
hath he shut up in anger his [z]compassions? Selah.
And I said, This is my infirmity:
[there are] [a]years of the right hand of the Most High.

4 (11-15): God in experience.
(i.) Jah.
(ii.) His work.

I will make mention of the [b]works of Jah:
for I remember thy wonders of old.
And I will [c]meditate on all thy work,
and talk of thy doings.

w *cf.* Is. 38. 10, 11. *cf.* Mal. 3. 6.
x *cf.* Is. 64. 9. *cf.* Is. 54. 7–10.
y *cf.* Is. 49. 13–16.
z *cf.* Ps. 71. 18.
a Ps. 31. 22. *cf.* Ps. 73. 21, 22.
b *cf.* Ps. 102. 12, 24.
c Ps. 1. 2. Ps. 143. 5.

it be, then, that He would act in opposition to this? A temporary "forsaking" would not be opposition: for chastening means present interest and future blessing; and was this, then, chastening, or renunciation of the favor that He once had shown?

In his next two questions the psalmist weighs his evidences. The divine loving-kindness, can that be at an end—exhausted? is the fountain of love dried up? This is of course an impossibility; and he is arguing that it is an impossibility. And yet *in application* to themselves, how many are tempted to believe it! How many admit the suggestion of some sin possibly unpardonable to him who sincerely turns to God about it, and would find his refuge in the blood of Christ! But no: there stands as the complete denial of this the unfailing word of divine inspiration: "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from *all* sin." Here is no limit, and who shall make one? Whatever may be true as to unpardonable sin, it cannot mean that any such can be to one who has recourse to the blood of Christ; or that He will cast out, for any cause whatever, any one who in the day of present grace shall come to Him (1 Jno. i. 7; John vi. 37).

But this brings us to the second question of the psalmist: "has His word failed for all generations?" Here, too, is an impossibility; but let us see what it implies. It is "His word" that is in question, not "His promise"; and this makes it much more weighty. God has been pleased to give us His word, and this indeed is "loving-kindness" to do so, and the parallelism of the verse is complete. He has written *Himself* out on the page of Scripture,—given us to see His heart, His mind: it may be in His dealings with this or that person, in His announcement as to this or that event. All this rests (as to its blessing to me) upon the immutability of His nature, the assurance that I shall find Him for myself the self-same God that He has been to others. Were He changeful, capricious, limited, I could argue nothing, find comfort in nothing:—for all generations His word would be practically gone. Were His "loving-kindness" anything but the infinite fount of blessing that it is, no declarations of it for another would help me, no words of other times would avail me now. But blessed be God, this cannot be. He is Himself, always Himself, no attribute at strife with another in His changeless and perfect nature. How I can rejoice, then, that Abraham's God is mine; and what unfailing assurance any one that will, may gather from His word!

Here then is the point of the argument: it is God Himself in whom we can trust, and that, whatever the present circumstances. "Has the Mighty One (*El*) *forgotten* to be gracious? Must any circumstances whatever be allowed to argue infirmity in Him? "Has He shut up (contracted) in anger His compassions?" No, be assured. His very anger is the effect of love itself: cast yourself upon His love, this anger will not harm you; His chastening shall but purify and bless.

And thus we come to a point: shall we argue infirmity in Him or in *ourselves?* Here there can be no question, and the trouble is ended: "And I said, This is

(iii.) Himself.
Thy way, O God, is in the [d]sanctuary:
[e]who is the mighty one so great as God?
(iv.) experience among the peoples.
Thou art the Mighty One that doeth [f]wonders:
thou hast made [g]known thy strength among the peoples.
(v.) man with God.
With thine arm hast thou [h]redeemed thy people,
the sons of [i]Jacob and of Joseph. Selah.

5 (16–20): God in the sea.
(i.) owning His power.
The [j]waters saw thee, O God,
the waters saw thee, they were afraid;
the depths also trembled.

[d] Ps. 73. 17. *cf.* ver. 19.
[e] Ps. 86. 8.
[f] Ps. 78. 4.
[g] Ps. 67. 2. Ps. 9. 11.
[h] Ex. 15. 16.
[i] *cf.* Is. 44. 1, 2. Ps. 80. 1. Ps. 81. 4, 5.
[j] Ex. 14. 21. Ps. 114. 3, 5.

my infirmity"—"my *malady*," it might be rendered: "there are *years* of the right hand of the Most High;"—an inadequate statement, which is all the more effective. "God has had years of experience," he says to himself: and that so feebly represents the truth, and yet in that enfeebled form, so forbids doubt, that immediately he is master of himself again, and can only praise Him.

4. Back he can go now at once to Scripture, to those old experiences of God, now once more so available for him. "I will make mention of the works of Jah," he says: "for I remember Thy wonders of old; and I will meditate on all Thy work, and talk of Thy doings." "Jah," the contracted form of Jehovah, speaks in the most energetic, decisive way of the One who is, as if He were the only reality. And so, in a true sense, He is: for "in Him we live and move and have our being," and He governs absolutely where most his authority seems set aside. Had we eyes purged from all films, where would we find a thing which might not be a text from which to descant upon the "works of Jehovah?" and with what blessing to our own souls, as well as to the souls of others. Even the "wonders of old" are but as it were the visible signs and tokens of a manner of work which everywhere has the stamp of the same Author. Indeed that is what gives them their main charm and interest. Oh for eyes without a film! we shall have them: but do not let us be so satisfied with that assurance as to put away from us the present opportunity of learning such glorious things.

But he goes on: "Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary"—not simply, I think, "in holiness," though that be the main thought. But the sanctuary suggests more than this,—suggests already even, what the next section more develops, the hidden character of His ways, which are yet not hidden of *His* will, for He is ever seeking to make them known, but of necessity, by reason of men's estrangement from Him. The sanctuary, thank God, does not to us, as to Israel, so much speak of this: for it is what characterizes Christianity that the veil of it is rent from top to bottom; and we have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus" (Heb. x. 19). Blessed it is to know this! but beyond measure blessed to *draw really near* because we know it! Practically still the measure of our knowledge must depend upon that purging of the eyes, of which we have been speaking. The light shines, and here is our responsibility, and here is our privilege. What we see is a question to be answered, each one for himself.

But it is in holiness God's way is, and "the knowledge of the Holy is understanding": therefore we enter into His mind as His mind enters into us. And then indeed shall we realize: "who is the mighty one (*El*) so great as God?" And if He be thus necessarily hidden by His own perfection, yet is He not outside the knowledge of men everywhere: for "Thou art the Mighty One that doeth wonders: Thou hast made known Thy strength among the peoples." And here especially in Israel—through His relationship to these—He is made known, and in the grace which this declares: "with Thine arm hast Thou redeemed Thy people, the sons of Jacob and of Joseph."

5. Here the fifth section opens, and we find in the way in which God manifested Himself as with His people and for their deliverance, how the powers of nature in which He so much hides Himself, are nevertheless perfectly at His dis-

(ii.) elemental activity.

The [k]clouds poured out water;
the skies sent out a sound;
thine [l]arrows also went abroad.

(iii.) manifestations.

The voice of thy [m]thunder was in the whirlwind;
the lightnings lightened the world;
the earth [n]trembled and quaked.

(iv.) in nature-forms.

Thy way is in the [o]sea,
and thy paths in the great waters,
and thy footsteps* are [p]not known.

(v.) with His people.

Thou leddest thy people like a [q]flock
by the hand of [r]Moses and Aaron.

* Literally, "heels."

k *cf.* Gen. 7. 11, 12. Ps. 18. 11.
l Ps. 18. 14. Ps. 144. 6.
m Is. 30. 30. Ps. 29.3–11.
n 2 Sa. 22. 8. Ps. 97. 4.
o Ex. 14. 21. Hab. 3. 15. *cf.* ver. 13.
p *cf.* Is.45.15. Is. 42. 16.
q *cf.* Num.9. 18. Ps.78.52,53. Ps. 80. 1. *cf.* Is.63.11–14.
r *cf.* Ex. 4. 14, 27, 28; Ps. 99. 6.

posal, and work in behalf of those with whom He is. The psalmist is drawing the picture manifestly of the deliverance at the Red Sea, although of the convulsions of nature described, the history gives no account. The moral drawn from it is of the widest application.

"The waters saw Thee, O God; the waters saw Thee, they were afraid; the depths also trembled." Nature owned His power, while men doubted the Arm upon which they leaned, or else defied it, after abundant experience. But not only did nature tremble and give place, but the elements yielded themselves to His will: "the clouds poured out water; the skies sent out a sound; Thine arrows also went abroad." But there was that which has ever to man been more like the manifestation of God, and which Scripture recognizes in this way: "The voice of Thy thunder was in the whirlwind; the earth trembled and quaked."

And now comes the moral of God's clothing Himself in these nature-forms: "Thy way is in the sea, and Thy paths in the great waters; and Thy footsteps are not known." True as that may be, yet this "way" is with His people and in their behalf: "Thou leddest Thy people like a flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron." Thus in the dark as in the light He is the same; and in the dark, we can yet trust Him.

Sec. 2.

We have had, then, in the first section, the individual principles which manifest themselves in God's dealings with men in general. The present one gives their application in detail to the history of Israel. The difference between the two sections is plain upon a brief examination. The very first psalm here (the seventy-eighth) takes up the history at large in this way. The eightieth and eighty-first are similar, though more partial in their review. The eighty-second is the setting right of government in Israel, that it may correspond with the divine one: while the last (the eighty-third) gives the great final confederacy against them, which is that He whose Name alone is Jehovah may be manifested as Supreme over all the earth.

On the other hand the lack of generalization in this second section is as manifest as is its prevalence in the first. Along with this there lacks also the distinct Messianic character which we have in the seventy-fifth psalm; even God's controversy with the people as to the rejection of Christ being found elsewhere, and the testimony given here being necessarily the Old Testament history and not the New; this ending, however, in times which are still before us, (in prophecy therefore, not in history,) that "end of the (Mosaic) age" which we have often had presented to us as being of such intense interest and importance in connection with Israel's blessing, and God's disciplinary ways with them in connection with it.

The principles brought before us in the first section are, briefly, these: in the seventy-third psalm, the mysterious suffering of the righteous, while the wicked

SECTION 2. (Ps. lxxviii.-lxxxiii.)

The principles applied to Israel's history.

Ps. lxxviii.

[1]PSALM LXXVIII.

The consistency of God's ways, in which His grace is sovereign still.

Maskil of Asaph.

1 (1-8): God's provision.
a (1-4): A call to obedience.
(i.) a law.
(ii.) words that need discernment.

[s]GIVE ear, O [t]my people, to my law:
incline your ears unto the sayings of my mouth.
I will open my mouth in a [u]parable;
I will pour out [v]deep things of old:

s *cf.* Psalms 105, 106. Deu. 32. 1.
t *cf.* Dan. 9. 20.
u Ps. 49. 4. *cf.* 1 Cor. 10. 6-11.
v *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 10.

so often flourish: a mystery understood only in the sanctuary, where God's presence with us is realized on the one hand, and the holiness of His character who is thus present with us, on the other. In the seventy-fourth psalm the wicked one is not only flourishing, but seen in active hostility to God and to His people: a fact which gives, however, assurance of his final overthrow. In the seventy-fifth, all the foundations of the earth being in this way out of course, He must come who will govern for God in consistency with His character, and we must wait for Him. In the seventy-sixth, the whole earth is prostrate before Him: and this realized by faith beforehand, the wrath of man even now is seen to praise Him, nothing being suffered that will not do this. Lastly, the seventy-seventh psalm, in a deuteronomic summing up as to the divine ways, answers the deep perplexity of the soul occupied with these with the assurance that, while they are indeed in the sea at present, so that His footsteps are not known, they are yet in the sanctuary also: that is, not only holy, but in grace towards His people.

Essentially, thus, God's character is maintained as love and light; while it is seen also that as to the world all things are in disorder, and that faith is needed to discern the government of God, which yet exists and has absolute control over every single thing that transpires, and therefore makes all things work for good towards every individual among His people. Love acts, but often in disguise; the allowance of evil becomes a wholesome exercise and discipline for the soul; faith is practised and strengthened; we are called, as Peter tells us, "by glory and virtue" (valor), God developing in us the character which those must have who are by and by to be associated with Him who Himself takes the glory as the end of a path of suffering.

Such principles apply, as is evident, to the life of faith in all dispensations, whatever the differences which result from the difference of these. We are to look at them now in their application to Israel's history, taking in the past and the future for this, as necessary to its completeness. The rejection of Messiah, and the results of this to them, do not indeed appear: the reason for which we may in some measure apprehend, perhaps, but which it is not necessary to enter into now. That there is valid reason for it we may be sure beforehand; and this subject has had already some treatment in both of the preceding books of the Psalms.

PSALM LXXVIII.

The seventy-eighth psalm is most fittingly entitled a "Maskil"—an instruction. It surveys the history from Egypt until David: a sufficient sample, man being, as he is, the same at all times; and David's history being also the type, as we are well aware, of that of his Son and Lord. We can understand, therefore, why with this gleam of brightness the psalm ends; grace in him seen sovereign and victorious, after the long course of failure, as it will be in the end foreshadowed by it. The six sections mark this victory of God's grace, which is seen in measure all through, while everywhere His holiness and consistency with His character are conspicuous also.

(iii.) remembered and realized.
(iv.) and tested in experience.

Which we have heard and known,
and our [w]fathers have told us.
We will not hide [them] from their [z]children,
showing to the generations to come the [y]praises of Jehovah,
and his [z]strength, and his wonderful works which he hath done.

[w] Ps. 44. 1.
[x] Ex. 10. 2. Josh. 4. 21, 24. *cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 3, 5.
[y] Ps. 145. 4.
[z] Ps. 71. 18.

1. The first section gives us God's provision for His people, illustrated by the one who here addresses them. God is not satisfied with giving a written word to them, necessary as this is, and the basis of everything. His will is that there should be preachers of the Word and of all the works of the Lord of which it testifies and from which it draws its precious instruction. Preachers were to be in every family in Israel, and these preachers not an official class, but the heads of the families themselves. Practically, those who were competent to speak, spoke: the things they heard and knew they were not to hide, and such capacity is always responsibility, and in the nature of things must be,—a responsibility which none can devolve upon another. But let us hear the psalmist.

(*a*) He speaks with the authority of one speaking for God,—with the consciousness of the importance of what he utters. The language of conviction will ever be authoritative, and on that account held for assumptive and dogmatic by those who are either not near enough to God to know the secret of it, or not conscious enough of being afar off to want to change the confusion of twilight for the clear outlines of the day What comfort can there be for the soul, apart from the certainty of what it holds for truth? what happiness in the path, except there is full assurance of this being with God? Surely, none whatever. And the apostle Peter expresses what the goodness of God intends for us when he says: "If any one speak, let him speak as oracles of God," that is, as God's mere mouthpiece: while for the walk the Lord Himself declares: "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Thus the blessedness to which we are called is manifest. Oh that we may live up to the full privileges that are ours!

He begins then with an exhortation to obedience:

"Give ear, O my people, to my law": or "instruction," some would say; and that is, indeed, the primary meaning of the word; yet it is that regularly used for "law" (*torah*), and we must take it at least as implying the authority which truth ever has for the true. This is, in fact, what the numerical structure lays emphasis on, the number being that which speaks of sovereignty, supremacy. Therefore, "incline your ears unto the sayings of my mouth."

This "instruction" needs, however, penetration and discernment: "I will open my mouth in a parable; I will pour out deep things of old."

It is not, therefore, that only which is unmistakable at first sight that is authoritative. But how many excuse themselves from obedience on just such grounds! Thus Scripture, which is professedly oftentimes "deep," as here, becomes a thing so far which may be unknown, nay, slighted, without blame. "Deep" things are for the deep, the people who have mind for it, or taste, or learning, or leisure, or all of these! Parables, types, prophecies, the larger part of what they too, with the rest, call "the word of God," become so much spiritual bric-à-brac, which it is rather a proof of sobriety of mind to do without, or, at least, to value at a low rate. But is the psalmist commending to us these things, or the reverse, when he speaks of them as "deep things" or "parables"? Does he address himself to the many or to the few? to the people as a whole, or to some spiritual aristocracy? after all, not an aristocracy by spiritual qualities, but by natural, or even by circumstantial differences? For there *is*, let it be known, a spiritual aristocracy, (if you please to call it so,) but it is defined by *devotedness and diligence of heart:* and where these are found, the race of the prophets still is found, to whom the words of Amos will apply (chap. iii. 7):

b (5-8): The testimony to be maintained.
(i.) appointed of God.
(ii.) for transmission
(iii.) the reason that they should remember.
(iv.) and not fail as their fathers.

And he established a [a]testimony in Jacob,
and appointed a law in Israel:
which he charged our fathers to show unto their children;
That the generation following might know [them],
the children that should be born:
[who] should arise and tell [them] to their children;
And they should put their [b]confidence in God,
and not forget the works of the Mighty One,
but [c]keep his commandments;
And not be as their [d]fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation,
a generation that prepared not their heart,
and their spirit was not [e]steadfast with the Mighty One.

a Deu. 6.6,7.
b cf. 1 Pet.1. 21.
c Deu. 4. 2,6. *cf.* Neh.1.7, 9.
d cf. Num. 32. 8–14. Acts 7. 51–53. Matt. 23.34–36.
e ver. 37. Hos. 6. 4.

"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets."

When we go on to look at the psalm which is thus characterized, however, we may have difficulty in discussing how it fulfills the titles which are thus given to it. From beginning to end it is *historic*,—an appeal to facts which we already have in books that are devoted to the "wonderful works" of the Lord in relation to Israel. For God never left such things to tradition merely. What would tradition be in the hands of those whose incompetency every way the history itself demonstrates so absolutely? But this history, being what it is, and *of* what it is, is just what is suited to utter divine secrets to the heart that is attentive. It is the ways of God put in connection with the men and their ways, to which these apply. Thus, since we are men, and the same God is ours and theirs, the history becomes a parable or similitude,—something by which, as we compare things together, what we are and what God is to us will be brought out. Thus the very history becomes a mirror for us, not merely of ourselves, but of *ourselves in the light of God*. How good thus to know ourselves!

Then indeed, our own history and the history of God's people at all times, become united in one glorious whole, which fills the soul with light and blessing. "What we have heard and known," and what "our fathers have told us" come into the most instructive agreement. Our lives are seen not to be broken and disjointed, and so far, meaningless fragments, but are lifted into significance and power. The actors in all this human history become friends and counsellors. The precepts of the Word are powerfully enforced, illustrated, and fastened in their place by these vivid pictures, all the more fitted to lay hold of us by the exceptional magnitude of the events which come before us in them,—*only made plainer, and not distorted by their magnitude.*

Were we thus more realizing the ways of God with us, the natural consequence would follow that we should be (how much!) more competent witnesses to those that come after us in the same path. "What we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us, we will not hide from their children, showing to the generations to come the praises of Jehovah, and His strength, and His wonderful works that He has done." This is what secures the blessing that is in it, that it is His praises that are being thus sustained and spread abroad. God is in His place, and thus all else, in the same proportion that He is so.

(*b*) The second part here declares this perpetual testimony to be designed of God, to maintain the memory of His acts and the authority of His commands, in view of the constant proneness upon man's part to forget. The living voice of the preacher was to make, in the lower sense of this, the Word living. And the preacher was not to be official, but, as we may say, the one everywhere

2 (9-16): Contrasted ways.
a (9-11): Rebellion.
(i.) sufficient to have stood.
(ii.) their refusal.
(iii.) the reason.

The children of [f]Ephraim, archers [g]equipped,
turned back in the day of encounter.
They kept not the [h]covenant of God,
and refused to walk in his law;
And they forgat his works,
and his [i]wonders that he had shown them.

[f] *cf.* Gen. 49. 3, 4 with 1 Chr. 5. 1, 2. *cf.* Gen. 48. 17-20 with Is. 2. 22.
[g] *cf.* Num. 14. 1-10. *cf.* 1 Sam. 17. 45-47.

Josh. 7. 8. [h] *cf.* Deu. 29. 25. [i] Ps. 106. 13; Ps. 107. 8.

installed by nature. God, as the Author of nature, confirms its appointment. We may now pass on to the history.

2. The second section shows us now, in brief but decisive contrast, the ways of the people and the ways of God. As to the people, this is put in the most general terms, the tribe of Ephraim being taken as their representatives, for reasons which we shall have presently to consider. The ways of God are shown by reference to the great features of His intervention for them in Egypt and the wilderness. The miracles in Egypt are only referred to, and come up for review more fully afterwards; the others are not spoken of again in the psalm.

(*a*) On the people's side there is not seen merely failure. It is carefully explained that what might seem that was in reality much more. *With God*, they could not fail. If they did so, it was because they refused to walk in His law. At first sight, what is said of Ephraim also appears as if it were an incident only, but it is not so. Ephraim is but representative of the conduct of all the tribes; their action as typical as they themselves are.

When Israel entered the land, it was under the Ephraimite, Joshua. When the ark came first to rest in the land, it was in Ephraimitic Shiloh that it rested. "Shiloh" is the name given to Messiah in Jacob's prophecy as to the tribes (Gen. xlix.), and means "He who gives peace": the rest of the ark might well seem to intimate that that peace was now at hand.

The tribe of Ephraim, the younger of the brother tribes of Joseph, but in Jacob's prophecy concerning these (Gen. xlviii.) exalted to the first place, might well therefore in Joshua's time claim the leadership in Israel. Reuben had lost the birth-right which was his originally, and Joseph, the first-born of Rachel, had gained it: these two sons of his taking place with the sons of Jacob themselves, showing him to have the double portion of the first-born. Every way, therefore, in title as in fact, the preeminence then belonged to Ephraim.

But the title under which they inherited the land at that time had, as we well know, one fundamental defect: it was this, that it was held according to the covenant of law,—the covenant which, in ignorance of themselves and of God, they had taken upon themselves to keep. Their failure therefore to hold this title was inevitable; although only by degrees did this become apparent. In Jacob's blessing of the tribes Judah occupies a large place; but Joseph, it might be claimed, one still larger. If Shiloh is spoken of in connection with Judah, the Shepherd and Stone of Israel is spoken of in connection with the other: *what* the connection, might still be doubtful. In Moses' blessing, Joseph again has undeniably the larger place. No other tribe could claim precedence, if Judah failed.

Apart from all typical significance, (which, of course, could not be pleaded in the case,) Joshua, therefore, was the natural leader in taking possession of the land, and might well seem to emphasize the claim of Ephraim. Thus Ephraim comes into the psalm here as the representative tribe: but it is no longer said of him, as of Joseph it had been, "his bow abode in strength." The language might seem in designed opposition to this: "the children of Ephraim, archers equipped, turned back in the day of encounter." Equipped they were, and therefore sufficient to have stood. God had not failed them; circumstances were not too strong for them. Nor lacked there any assurance of successful issue. They stood upon ground secured to them by the divine promise: "every place that the sole of your foot shall tread on shall be your own." Yet in spite of all

b (12–16) His deliverances. (i.) the beginning.

In the sight of their fathers he had done wondrous things
in the land of [j]Egypt, the field of Zoan.
He [k]clave the sea, and caused them to pass through,
and made the waters stand as a heap;
And he [l]led them with a cloud by day,
and all the night with a light of fire.
He [m]clave the rocks in the wilderness,
and gave them drink as from the depths abundantly.
And he brought [n]streams out of the rock,
and caused waters to run down like rivers.

(ii.) the division of the sea.
(iii.) His presence in the midst.
(iv.) in the wilderness: need met.
(v.) living waters. (?)

j Neh. 9. 10. ver. 43. Ex. chaps. 5–14.
k Ex. 14. 21. Neh. 9. 11. Ps. 136. 13.
l Ex. 13. 21. Num. 9. 15–23.
m Ex. 17. 6. Num. 20. 11.
n Ps. 114. 8.

3 (17–32): In the presence of God so manifested.
a (17–22): sin against His power. (i.) who is Supreme. (ii.) lust. (iii.) speech against God.

And they [o]sinned yet against him,
provoking the Most High in the desert.
And they [p]tempted the Mighty One in their heart,
by asking food for their lust*:
And they spake against God:
they said, [q]Can the Mighty One prepare a table in the wilderness?

o ver. 56.
p Num. 11. 4–6. Ex. 17. 2. Deu. 6. 16.
q Ex. 16. 1–3. *cf.* Ps. 23. 5.

* *Nephesh*, soul.

this, they turned back: it was no mere failure: "they kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in His law; and they forgat His works, and His wonders that He had shown them."

(*b*) This is a common history, and it was that of the whole nation. Yet what had He not done for them! It was no unknown God who laid claim to their obedience. He had manifested Himself to them in mighty miracles by which He had shaken to its centre what was then the greatest kingdom upon earth, which held them in its cruel grip relentlessly. He had made the sea to yield a path for their escape, the waters standing as a heap while they passed through. He had Himself led them by that which, always the opposite of nature, answered to their need, a cloud by day, the light of fire by night. In the wilderness He had cleft the rocks for them, at Horeb and at Meribah, and given them drink abundantly, as out of the depths. Nay, He had brought streams out of the rock, and caused the waters to run down like rivers.*

3. (*a*) The third section shows how the people had sinned in the very presence of God so manifested to them. It was not a later generation merely that did so, with whom the knowledge of these things had grown dim in the years that had elapsed since their recurrence, but the very generation among whom such miracles had been displayed. People scoff now, because they see no miracles; but so they did when the miracles were before their eyes: "they sinned yet more against Him, and provoked the Most High in the desert,"—there where His supremacy over all nature had been unequivocally demonstrated in their behalf. Miracles did not repress the craving of hearts away from God, for which one thing denied could turn the bounteous Giver into one incompetent to secure the blessing of those with whom He had charged Himself. Yet in the same breath they own what He had already done in bringing water out of the rock. To

* The last two verses refer, of course, to the same two miracles, though these are differently emphasized. The fourth verse speaks of need met simply, though abundantly met; the fifth of what in the language of Scripture would be called "living", *i. e.*, "running" waters. The typical interpretation would give here a gleam of light as to the structure: for, while 4 is the number of the creature, 5—that is, 4 plus 1,—brings into connection with this the thought of God in relation to the creature, which the "living water" as the type of the Spirit of God (Jno. vii. 38, 39) would answer to. But this involves, of course, interpretation of this character, and as ruling where the literal meaning seems the first thing. The natural constantly is the basis of the spiritual, as we have often seen; but I can only suggest the question and leave it.

(iv.) the reproach of weakness.

Behold, he smote the rock, and waters gushed out,
and streams overflowed:
can he give bread also?
will he provide flesh for his people?

(v.) government.
(vi.) the evil manifested.

Therefore Jehovah heard, and was [r]wroth,
and fire was kindled against Jacob,
and anger also went up against Israel;

b (23-25): against their Preserver.

Because they [s]believed not in God,
and trusted not in his salvation.

(i.) whose power had acted for them,

And he had commanded the clouds from above,
and opened the [t]doors of the heavens;

(ii.) to sustain with manna;

And had rained down upon them manna to eat,
and given them of the corn of the heavens:

(iii.) provision to the full.

Man ate the [u]bread of the mighty:
he sent them provision to the full.

r Num. 11. 1-3.

s *cf.* Ps. 106. 12, 13. ver. 32.

t Ex. 16. 4.

u Neh. 9.15. *cf.* 1 Ki. 19. 5-8 with Deu. 33. 25.

provide flesh, they thought, was a more difficult thing, and transcended His ability. Thus they turned His hand against themselves: "fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger went up" in the flame that rose "against Israel." Unbelief was the only sin with them, as it always has been the sin that provoked judgment: unbelief that came not from lack of evidence, for of that there was abundance, but from wills that rebelled against His easy yoke.

(*b*) As in the book of Numbers, when the people are murmuring about the food which God has given them, and craving flesh, as we are here reminded, the Spirit of God turns to describe this manna which they are rejecting, so now does the psalmist, though in a different manner. He especially dwells upon it as bread from heaven, and then upon the strength given by it, for that is surely what is meant by calling it "the bread of the mighty"—bread that *produces* might. Nor are we to think of any figurative sense of the words, or any typical significance of the manna itself. The purpose to which he applies the history forbids any thought of this in the case, as is evident. The marvel was great indeed, and fitted to appeal to the heart, that the food which the desert soil denied should come to them from heaven! When we think of the precisely measured quantity, on the sixth day double every other day, following them wherever they journeyed for forty years, until it ceased, just after passing Jordan,—it was a stupendous miracle. No wonder that imagination should picture it, (as the Septuagint, but *not* the Hebrew, does) as "angels' food." No wonder that it should be really—prepared in such a manner, with such abundant care,—"bread of the mighty"; like the food in the strength of which Elijah went forty days and forty nights, through this same wilderness, "to Horeb, the mount of God." "Provision to the full" it was, excluding any possible need of any other. And that is the point here.

God had provided for them; and how then could that provision be other than perfectly adapted to their need? In fact, it was the food to nourish a race of mighty men. Yet that wilderness-food was but the type of ours. This spiritual manna, what ought it not to produce in us in the way of strength and courage! what spiritual heroes ought we not to be! Nay, we should say rather, what *will* there not be in this way, if God's food be really partaken of in faith and simplicity. Communication with Christ,—the entering into that self-sacrificing love which brought Him down to us, and gave Him for our sins! what manner of men *must* this make of us, in all holy conversation and godliness! If this be lacking, it is not that God's provision has failed, for that cannot be, but that *we* have despised and turned away from it: and who can doubt that this is largely the case now? Plenty of activity in benevolent work there may be, where this is true; and the very enthusiasm for this work which leads professing Christians to associate for such ends with the deniers and despisers of Christ Himself, is the surest evidence of this.

c (26-28): complete manifestation. (i.) power acting. (ii.) the answer to their cavil. (iii.) brought fully home.
d (29-32): the failure under the new test. (i.) sufficiency, (ii.) joined to their lust. (iii.) the action of holiness. (iv.) and departure still.
4 (33-39): The fallen creature. (i.) under the hand of God.

He caused the [v]east wind to blow in the heavens,
and by his power brought the south wind.
And he rained flesh on them like dust,
and winged fowl as the sand of the seas;
And he let it fall in the [w]midst of their camp,
round about their habitations.
And they ate and were well [x]filled,
and he gave them their longing.
They were not estranged from their longing;
their food was yet in their mouths,
When the anger of God went up against them:
and he [y]slew their fat ones,
and smote down the choice men of Israel.
For all this, they [z]sinned yet,
and believed not his wondrous works.

And he [a]consumed their days in vanity,
and their years with terror.

v Num. 11. 31, 32.
w *cfr.* Ex. 5. 10-13.
x Num. 11. 20. Prov. 30. 8, 9. *cf.* Ezek. 16. 49.
y Num. 11. 33, 34.
z Neh. 9. 16, 17. Num. 14. 9, 10.
a Ps. 95. 7-11. Num. 14. 29-35. Num. 17. 12, 13.

(*c*) The people, however, have turned from the manna: they desire flesh; and, their craving being ungratified, they have questioned even the ability of God to give it. He will not therefore permit this. They shall see that His hand is not shortened, and that the creatures that He has made are subject to Him, though sin has made man a rebel. Once more the powers of heaven therefore are in activity: the east wind unites with the south wind to accomplish His will, and flesh is rained upon them more plentifully than manna was. Nor is there the least trouble in procuring it: it is all round about them, at their very doors: "He let it fall in the midst of their camp,—round about their habitations." The manifestation of His power and goodness is complete.

(*d*) But this necessarily becomes a new test for the people. God cannot be manifested to them without its being that. What will they do now, when His power and love to them are so perfectly demonstrated? Will they judge themselves for all these murmurings, and give Him the glory due to Him? Have they hearts capable of being touched by this new grace, which comes so entirely in the way which they have themselves indicated for it?

Alas, there is no response. This mercy is to them only the satisfaction of their lust. They eat to repletion of the food, hardened and stupefied by it, instead of blest; and the judgment of God falls upon them. It is, in fact, now the only remedy which even mercy knows. Judgment therefore picks out the fat ones, and the choice men of Israel are stricken down: and with what effect? "For all this, they sinned yet, and believed not His wondrous works." The genesis of unbelief, as rather in the heart than in the head, is perfectly apparent.

4. This ends the detailed story of the wilderness, to which we have only a general reference again (verses 40, 41), and the place is reached in which we may now survey man, this fallen creature, and ask, what is he? It is a question very necessary to be faced and answered, if we ourselves are to go on with God. If we trust in man, it is ourselves we trust in: for we are men. If we trust in ourselves, in that exact proportion will God's ways be dark to us, and Himself unknown. The Cross it is in which together man finds his judgment, and God manifests Himself in the glory that is His. If it be not man's due, then is the cross mere martyrdom, and Christ at best but Prince of martyrs. If it be man's due, and by a death under His wrath on sin God alone could save us, then how completely must man be put out of sight, in order that there may be a righteous ground for our salvation,—that God may be righteous in it. And Christianity is not the restoration (even by grace) of this ruined creature. It is the setting aside—the crucifixion of the old man, that Christ may be now the New Man, in whom God sees us, and in whom we see ourselves,—that I may live, no longer

(ii.) their response to it.
When he slew them, then they [b]sought him,
and returned, and sought diligently after the Mighty One;

(iii.) the memory of their Refuge.
And they remembered that God was their [c]Rock,
and the Mighty One, the Most High, their Redeemer.

(iv.) false still.
But they [d]flattered him with their mouth,
and lied unto him with their tongue:

(v.) in relationship to Him.
And their heart was not [e]firm with him,
and they were not steadfast in his covenant.

(vi.) the limit put by His compassion.
But he was [f]compassionate:
he forgave [their] perversity and destroyed [them]
not,
and [g]often turned away his anger;
and did not stir up all his wrath.

(vii.) the complete account of man.
And he remembered that they were [h]flesh:
breath that goeth and returneth not.

b *cf.* Ex. 33. 5–7 with Hos. 5. 15.
c Deu. 32. 4, 15,18,31,32.
d *cf.* Jer. 3. 10. *cf.* Ezek. 14. 1.
e *cf.* Ezek. 33. 31 with Ex. 19. 8.
e ver. 8.
f *cf.* Ex. 34. 5–7. *cf.* Num. 14. 15–20.
g *cf.* Is. 43. 24. Deut. 9.
h Is. 2. 22. Gen. 6. 3. Is. 57. 16.

I, but Christ in me (Gal. ii. 20). Faith, which is but the turning of the back on self, being now the only principle of fruitfulness and power, we walk in Christ as we live in Christ. They are the true circumcision who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have *no confidence in the flesh* (Phil. iii. 3).

The review here is of the greatest importance, and we have it with such completeness as man's history thus far could give it, in seven sections, in which there is not omitted the pitifulness of God's estimate, while He is truthful in it. True, "He consumed their days in vanity, and their years in terror;" yet it was the only thing that would in any wise recall them to Himself: for "when He slew them, then they sought Him, and returned, and sought diligently after the Mighty One." It was might that they needed to be put forth for them, and the memory of former deliverances wrought with them: "they remembered that God was their Rock, and the Mighty One, the Most High, their Redeemer."

Something now was surely accomplished. Their need had been most real, and the remembrance of God was also real; the days of the Judges come to our mind, when "the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah, and Jehovah raised them up a deliverer." Yet how constantly had fresh captivity followed deliverance! Alas, it was manifest that when they turned to God it was but half-heartedly: the greatness of their need had constrained them, and not a love responsive to the love that had been shown them. "They had flattered Him with their mouth, and lied unto Him with their tongue, and their heart was not firm with Him, and they were not steadfast in His covenant."

What hope then in man, whom judgment brings but to a forced and temporary amendment, and mercies move but to forgetting Him altogether? Yet He went on still in mercy manifest, or chastening with what was mercy in disguise: "He was compassionate, and forgave their perversity, and destroyed them not; and often turned away His anger, and did not stir up all His wrath." And why? Ah, "He remembered that they were flesh: breath that goeth and returneth not." Frailty and transience could not be more perfectly characterized than by that which is the sign and accompaniment of the life within man. Flesh, too, is that which in all its waste and renewal teaches the same lesson; while as the lowest part of him, and yet into which he seems altogether sunk, it speaks of ruin, which, to be such for a creature such as man, must be *moral* ruin. The Lord's argument from this condition is, that he "must be born again."

5. The following section shows Israel's history in conformity with this; and God's dealings with them until everything seems gone; His link with them broken, the ark in captivity, the priests that served it slain. It is the history of centuries of long-suffering on His part, though compressed in so brief a space.

5 (40–64): The way and the end, as to the people.
a (40–43): A rebellious people. (i.) from the beginning. (ii.) the contradiction of sinners. (iii.) remembering not. (iv.) His signs in Egypt.
b (44–50) His ways in their deliverance. (i.) nature rebels against God's rebels. (ii.) abasement by the humblest means. (iii.) the fruit of labor under ban. (iv.) nature itself smitten.

How oft they [i]rebelled against him in the wilderness,
and [j]grieved him in the desert!
And they turned back, and tempted the Mighty One,
and set [k]limits to the Holy One of Israel.
They [l]remembered not his hand,
the day when he redeemed them from the oppressor:
How he set his [m]signs in Egypt,
and his miracles in the field of Zoan.
And he had turned their rivers into [n]blood,
and their streams, that they could not drink;
He sent [o]swarms among them which devoured them,
and [p]frogs that brought destruction on them;
And he gave their produce to the caterpillar,
and their labor unto the [q]locust.
And he killed their vines with [r]hail,
and their sycamores with hail-stones.

i Is. 63. 10. Num. 14. 11.
j Ps. 95. 10.
k vers. 19, 20. *cf.* Gen. 18. 14.
l ver. 11.
m vers. 11, 12. Ex. chaps. 7–12. Ps. 105. 27.
n Ex. 4. 9. Ex. 7. 19–25. Ps. 105. 29.
o Ex. 8. 20–32. Ps. 105. 31.
p Ex. 8. 1–15. Ps. 105. 30.
q Ex. 10. 12–20. Ps. 105. 34.
r Ex. 9. 18–35. Ps. 105. 32, 33.

But in truth the elements are few and simple, and the history in its general character monotonous enough. It is prefaced by a longer detail of how he had acted on their behalf in Egypt to deliver them: showing to them and to men at large in impressive detail the complete dependence of all things upon Himself. Hence in the world's insubjection to Him, the subjection of things to man is lost, and the course of nature is turned against him. Such lessons learned at the start, how much would have been spared them! How strange that each generation must needs learn by experience what the combined experience of the race has been ineffectual to teach it! Israel is in all this a constant example to us.

(*a*) The wilderness is first of all glanced at, to remind us how they rebelled against Him there,—how "they turned back, and tempted the Most High, and set limits to the Holy One of Israel." One would imagine rather that it would be said, that they set limits to the *Mighty* One,—that is, to His power; but the thought is that it is His holiness which, in view of their sin, hinders Him from coming in for them. Is it not so, that God's "delights are with the sons of men," and that, as we see in Christ come down among us, He would give free way to His love, but that unbelief on our part forces Him behind the veil, puts "bounds around the Mighty," in His very love to us? Alas, so can His redeemed ones act, though partakers of a better redemption, that Israel of old should be their sign: for "*they* remembered not His hand,—the day when He redeemed them from the oppressor: how He set His signs in Egypt, His miracles in the field of Zoan." Signs of this kind are for His people to read, that they may escape them. They take effect as to the *world*, the state of which they reveal as away from God, and the contrast between it and His people; who are yet warned by them of the things "on account of which the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience."

(*b*) Such an application of the plagues of Egypt follows in the next section: in the very first of which we see, as before remarked, nature rebelling against those in rebellion against God. The river, in its various channels by which the land was watered, and which was the very sign of their independence of heaven, —which they adored as a god, and yet could claim as their own making (Ezek. xxix. 3)—things which to all idolatry agree well together,—the river was turned into blood, so that they could not drink of it. The support of life becomes the very symbol of death, and of death by violence, the infliction of the penalty. It is, in fact, not merely the insurrection of nature that is here, but penalty from the Creator of nature—death from the Life-giver.

(v.) nature in its sympathy with man.
(vi.) fullness of evil.
(vii.) the consummation.

And he delivered up their cattle to the hail,
and their flocks to the [s]hot thunderbolts.
He sent on them the fierceness of his anger,
wrath and indignation and distress,—
a mission of messengers of ill.
He leveled a road for his [t]anger:
he spared not their soul from death,
but delivered their life to the pestilence.

c (51–55): Israel put in possession of the land.
(i.) the strength of Egypt (the first-born) smitten.
(ii.) deliverance.
(iii.) their refuge.
(iv.) the land.
(v.) in governmental award.

And he smote all the [u]first-born in Egypt,
the topmost of their strength in the tents of Ham.
And he [v]led forth his people like sheep,
and [w]guided them in the wilderness like a flock.
And he led them safely, so that they feared not,
but the [x]sea covered their enemies.
And he brought them to his holy [y]border,
this mountain, which his right hand acquired.
He [z]drove out also nations before them,
and allotted them for an [a]inheritance by line,
and made Israel's tribes to dwell in their tents.

s Ps. 18. 13.
t Ex. 9. 17.
u Ex. 11. Ex. 12. 29, 30. Ps. 105. 36. Ps. 136. 10.
v Ps. 77. 20. Ps. 80. 1.
w Ps. 136.16. *cf.* Is. 40.7.
x Ex. 14.23–28. Ps. 106. 11.
y Ex. 15. 17. *cf.* Deu. 1. 1–3, etc.
z Ps. 44. 2. Ps. 80. 8.
a Num. 34. 16–29. Josh.chps. 13–19.

Next, in another order from that in Exodus, and two miracles being classed together to make the lesson clear,—the pride of Egypt is abased by two of the meanest instrumentalities, the "swarms" (no doubt, of insects) and the "croakers of the marsh," as the word for frogs seems to mean in Hebrew.

Then the fruit of their labor, as that of unclean hands, is put under the ban and destroyed by what Joel calls the army of the Lord. And then nature itself is smitten by that which speaks of the withdrawal of God from it. Afterwards nature as in subjection to and sympathy with man, of which the cattle naturally speak.*

Next, we find "a mission of messengers of ill," the more open manifestation and fullness of evil as from Him. And then death itself, and by pestilence, as the end of all, closes the list. No doubt, the death of the first-born is here included, though this is given in another connection, separately, as it stands in the book of Exodus itself, apart from the other plagues.

(*c*) We now find Israel put in possession of the land, toward which the death of the first-born is the first decisive step; the deliverance of the people follows, with which is connected God's guidance of them in the wilderness. The wilderness is no more mentioned. Then we have their safety from the presence of God with them, their enemies being buried in the sea; and then at once they are at the land: "He brought them to His holy border, this mountain which His right hand acquired." Last comes the governmental award of the land, of which for their sins He dispossessed the nations of Canaan.

All this is briefly told, but more effectually for its very brevity. God is now for them, and nothing can even delay His progress, except the unbelief and folly of those with whom He has charged Himself. In fact there was on this account a delay during the lifetime of the whole generation; but this is not now in question, and has indeed been already considered. The psalmist designs all this but as introduction to the story of their defection in the land, after all this power displayed for them.

* "The number five, as applied to man, speaks of man with God, the 4 of the creature being added to the 1 of the Creator. . . . But in the lower sphere in which we now are—penetrated everywhere as it is, however, with divine meaning—the 1 represents man instead of God, but man as His vice-gerent and in His image. Thus this last character of the rasorial type, as described by Mr. Swainson, the 'aptitude and disposition of those accomplishing it to submit to his dominion,' is surely as remarkable as unexpected an illustration of the number before us. Man with God means man subject to Him, under His dominion: here we have the image of that in the lower creatures." ("Spiritual Law in the Natural World," p. 137.)

d (56–58): departure again, in the land. (i.) rebellion, negatively. (ii.) active transgression. (iii.) in worship.

But they [b]tempted and rebelled against God Most High,
and observed not his testimonies;
But drew back and dealt faithlessly [c]like their fathers:
they turned aside like a [d]deceitful bow.
And they provoked him to anger with their [e]high places,
and moved him to jealousy with their [f]graven images.

e (59–61): governmental recompense. (i.) from God Himself. (ii.) changed relations. (iii.) Ichabod.

God heard, and was wroth,
and he greatly [g]abhorred Israel.
And he [h]forsook the tabernacle at Shiloh,—
the tent he had pitched among men.
And he gave his strength into [i]captivity,
and his beauty into the hand of the oppressor.

f (62–64): chastening. (i.) given up of God. (ii.) death the consumer. (iii.) the desolation of the sanctuary.

And he delivered his people to the [j]sword,
and was wroth with his inheritance.
The fire consumed their young men;
and their [k]maidens had no [marriage] song.
Their [l]priests fell by the sword,
and their widows made no lamentation.

b Judg. 2. 2, 11-15.
c ver. 8. *cf.* Acts 7. 51-53.
d Hos. 7. 16.
e Deu. 12. 2-7. *cf.* 1 Ki. 3. 3 with 1 Ki. 11. 6-9. 2 Chr. 33. 3, etc.
f Ex. 20. 4, 5.
g Ps. 106. 40.
h *cf.* 2 Chr. 7. 21, 22.
i 1 Sa. 4. 10, 11. 1 Sa. 5. 1, 2.
j 1 Sa 4. 17.
k *cf.* Jer. 7. 34. *cf.* Hos. 2. 11.
l 1 Sa. 4. 11, 19-22.

(*d*) The departure is now, still in the concisest manner, told out. There is nothing new in their course except the new opportunities afforded by the high places of the land: the departure is, first, negative rebellion, "they observed not His testimonies." Then, more positively and decisively, "they turned back, and dealt faithlessly, like their fathers: they turned aside like a deceitful bow." The next verse shows a direct attack upon the central worship: high places which the one sanctuary was intended to displace rose up again, and graven images moved the Lord to jealousy.

(*e*) The recompense follows in the next two sections: first of all, in His removal of the profaned sanctuary. Shiloh is given up, and the tent He had in wondrous loving-kindness pitched among men. And He gave His strength—"the ark of His strength" (Ps. cxxxii. 8) into captivity among the Philistines; and His beauty (or splendor)—still the ark, but in another aspect of it,—into the hand of the oppressor of Israel. Thus God, in every visible sign of relationship, had departed from Israel, and Ichabod, according to the declaration of the dying wife of Phinehas, was written upon the nation at large. Every regularly constituted link was snapped asunder. God might still speak by a prophet, and in fact did so, for this depended upon a grace which was sovereign with Him, His inalienable prerogative, whenever He was pleased to exercise it. But the established order of things was at an end. Nor was the ark restored to its place till David's time (1 Chron. xiii. 3; Ps. cxxxii. 6).

(*f*) If things went on otherwise well, man might feel little, alas, the loss of his great treasure. But because God will not give them up to this, more sensible chastening must ensue. Therefore, in very acknowledgment that in the thoughts of His heart they were still His people, He delivered them up to the sword; their young men were consumed in the fire of His anger, so that the maidens went unwedded. Their priests also fell by the sword, making the sanctuary doubly desolate; and their widows were dumb with a grief that went beyond the grief of widowhood.

This is the end, then, in fact, of the legal covenant, in one important aspect of it. The people had failed under it as first given—failed utterly at Sinai itself. Priesthood was then a resource, and with a modification of the first unsparing severity of law, they were put under it a second time, in the hands of a mediator: first, Moses, but then the family of Aaron. Now these, too, had utterly

6 (65–72): The victory of grace.
a (65, 66): The Lord awakening. (i.) in might. (ii.) defeated enemies.
b (67–69): changed relation. (i.) the first-born rejected. (ii.) the relation of love. (iii.) the restored sanctuary.
c (70–72): His Anointed. (i.) the chosen King. (ii.) transferred service.
(iii.) the realization.

Then the Lord [m] awaked as one out of sleep,
like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine;
And he [n] smote his adversaries backward,
an everlasting reproach he inflicted on them.
And he [o] rejected the tent of Joseph,
and chose not the tribe of Ephraim;
But he chose the tribe of [p] Judah,
the mount [q] Zion which he loved.
And he built his [r] sanctuary like the heights,
like the earth which he hath founded for ever.
And he chose [s] David his servant;
and took him from the [t] sheepfolds.
From following the ewes that give suck he brought him
to be [u] shepherd to Jacob his people
and Israel his inheritance.
And he [v] tended them after the integrity of his heart,
and guided them with the skillfulness of his hands.

m *cf.* 1 Sa. 5. 3, etc. *cf.* Ps. 44. 23, 24.
n 1 Sa. 7. 3–14.
o ver. 60. 1 Sa. 7. 1, 2.
p *cf.* Gen. 49. 8–12.
q Ps. 48. 1, 2. Ps. 132. 1–8. Ps. 87.
r Ps. 132. 13, 14. Ps. 48. 12, 13.
s 1 Sa. 15. 28. 1 Sa. 16. 11–13.
t 1 Sa. 17. 20.
u 2 Sa. 7. 8. 1 Chr. 11. 2. *cf.* Is. 40. 11.
v Ps. 28. 9.

failed, and all was gone once more. Samuel may be in this strait another Moses, and introduce one last method of trial after the legal sort, by the king. But the issue cannot now be any more doubtful, for "as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." The song of Moses had indeed foreseen it all from the beginning; and he who would take God's estimate of things could never at any time have been in doubt. Now it was proved, however, by ample experience, in the national history. Thus a momentous conclusion had in fact been reached. Man is "flesh," and of man in the flesh here is an end. Though David follow therefore in this psalm, this is not put now as if it were a new trial. David is but the expression of a grace in God which will need indeed Another in whom rightly to manifest itself; but the grace is here, and with David in this way seen, the psalmist ends. For faith there is left an open secret, to which his own last words bear witness. (2 Sam. xxiii. 1–7.)

6. The sixth section is clearly therefore a fresh division of the psalm, and not a continuation of the former one. It is also, beautifully, as we know, a trumpet-note of victory after defeat, but the Lord's victory, and not man's. And so, exactly, its opening words declare. Two verses are devoted to this thought.

(*a*) The Lord—not Jehovah, but Adonai, the Sovereign Lord—awakes, as the strong figure puts it, as one out of sleep; and His full strength is manifest at once with Him. He is "like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine." The excited energy of man is needed to furnish the figure: "He smote His adversaries backward; an everlasting reproach He inflicted upon them."

(*b*) But the new grace must have new experience. It must be seen that this is not a reinstating of the old conditions. The first-born, the primacy of nature, is once more rejected. The tent of Joseph is not restored; God's sovereignty of choice cannot be properly shown out in the taking up again for His abode the tribe of Ephraim. His new relation is one that depends solely upon the love that is in His own heart, and thus Zion becomes unchangeably the destined seat of His earthly kingdom, and Judah the tribe with which this is connected. And now the "tent" correspondingly gives place to a permanent dwelling. He builds as for eternity: "He built His sanctuary like the heights,—like the earth, which He founded for ever."

From these thoughts He has not departed. From this free choice he could not depart. In His counsel Zion is still, according to its name, the "fixed," and Judah the worshiper. Yet a little while, and His old abode shall be revisited in His love, in a favor no more to be withdrawn, as all the prophets witness. And thus we see how true a beginning of grace is exhibited here.

Ps. lxxix.

[2]PSALM LXXIX.

The plea against the invasion of the enemy.

A psalm of Asaph.

1 (1-4): The occasion.

(i.) against Thee.

(ii.) the dead bodies of Thy servants.

(iii.) "unburied"—the crime manifest.

(iv.) our shame.

O GOD, the [w]nations are come into thine inheritance:
thy holy [x]temple have they defiled:
they have laid Jerusalem in heaps.
They have given the dead bodies of thy servants
as [y]food to the birds of the heavens,
the flesh of thy saints to the beast of the earth.
They have shed their [z]blood like water round about Jerusalem;
and there was none to bury [them.]
We are become a [a]reproach to our neighbors:
a mockery and derision to those round about us.

w cf. Ps. 74. ver. 6.

x cf. Dan. 9. 27.
cf. Lam. 1. 10.

y cf. Jer. 7. 32-34.
cf. Jer. 19. 7.
cf. Matt. 24. 15-22.

z cf. Lam. 2. 21.
cf. Lk. 19. 43, 44.

a Ps. 80. 6. Lam. 2. 15, 16.

(*c*) The psalm ends with the "Anointed." The structure emphasizes this, and not merely the King: though he *is* King, and must be anointed, to be this. The eyes of the prophet are afar off, though David is in immediate sight: David, the "Beloved," here too God's heart has chosen, and will not give up its choice. David, first of all, *His* servant, proved in the lowly service of the flock, by and by to serve His true flock on the throne: to be shepherd to Jacob—well known as that, yet "His people," and "Israel His inheritance."

And God's thought was realized—though but partially indeed—in David. It is easy to hear the Voice that speaks to us in it with how much deeper meaning: "And he tended them after the integrity of His heart, and guided them with the skilfulness of His hands."

PSALM LXXIX.

The seventy-ninth psalm is strikingly similar to the seventy-fourth; and these occupy the same position in their respective sections. The one is the second psalm of the first section, as the other is of the second. In both it is the invasion of the enemy that is the subject, and in both they have profaned the very sanctuary of God. But in the seventy-fourth this and the similar destruction of the places of assembly in the land are the whole topic, while here it is still more the slaughter of the people of God themselves. But both are before us, and we have evidently such a state of things as that in the last psalm, when God removed His tabernacle from Shiloh, and His people were oppressed and slaughtered by the Philistine foe. Here it is the time of the end, and the desolation is still worse, and plainly hopeless, save to God Himself. But the greater the distress the greater the remedy; and as in the former case God raised up David, it is now a greater than David that is to be their resource, as we have seen in the psalms that follow. In the present we have only their prayer, the pleading which shows the ground they are on in their souls with God, and what is effectual with Him. Essentially, this ground is always in Himself, and the utter break-up of self-confidence it is which gives us a bolder and more confident appeal to Him.

There are thirteen verses in the psalm, which is divided otherwise as a twelve-versed psalm would be; the additional verse finding its place in the first section.

1. We have first the occasion of their prayer, the case spread out before God. It concerns Him. The nations have invaded His inheritance, defiled His temple, laid Jerusalem in heaps. They have given the dead bodies of His servants as food to the birds and beasts of prey. No doubt their sins—and they own it to be so—have provoked the Lord to anger; but here are enemies to Himself who have come in to slaughter those who at least were His servants, worshipers

2 (5-7): Thine anger! (i.) perpetual? (ii.) pour it out on aliens to Thee. (iii.) manifested such.

[b] How long, Jehovah? wilt thou be angry perpetually?
shall thy jealousy burn like fire?
Pour out thy [c] wrath upon the nations that have not known thee,
and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy Name.
For they have [d] devoured Jacob,
and laid waste his habitation.

3 (8-10): "For the glory of Thy Name!" (i.) look not on our fathers' sins. (ii.) deliver us and put away our sins. (iii.) manifest Thyself.

Remember not against us the [e] perversities of [our] forefathers:
let thy [f] compassions come speedily to meet us,
for we are [g] brought very low.
Help us, O God of our salvation, for the [h] glory of thy Name!
and deliver us, and [i] put away our sins for thy Name's sake!
Why should the nations say, [j] Where is their God?
let there be known among the nations in our sight
the [k] avenging of the blood of thy servants that hath been shed.

4 (11-13): their experience in their helplessness shall make their lives His praise. (i.) give life. (ii.) answer the adversaries. (iii.) we will show forth Thy praise.

Let the [l] groaning of the prisoner come before thee:
according to the greatness of thine arm, preserve those appointed to die.
And [m] render to our neighbors sevenfold into their bosom
their reproach with which they have reproached [n] thee, Lord.
And we, thy people and the [o] sheep of thy pasture,
will give thee [p] thanks for ever:
from generation unto generation we will [q] show forth thy praise.

b Ps. 6. 3. Ps. 85. 5.
c Jer. 10. 25. *cf.* Is. 10. 5-19. *cf.* Mi. 4. 11-13. *cf.* Ob. 10-16.
d Ps. 14. 4.
e Ps. 25. 7. *cf.* Dan. 9. 8, 9.
f Ps. 86. 15.
g Ps. 86. 1. *cf.* Deu. 32. 36.
h *cf.* Ezek. 36. 22, 32. *cf.* Jer. 7. 14, 21.
i Ps. 85. 1, 2. *cf.* Is. 1. 25-27.
j Ps. 42. 10. *cf.* Joel 2. 17.
k *cf.* Rev. 6, 9-11. *cf.* Is. 63. 1-6.
l *cf.* Ps. 102. 20. *cf.* Ps. 94. 1-7.
m *cf.* Jer. 50. 17-20.
n Ps. 74. 18, 22. *cf.* Is. 37. 23.
o Ps. 95. 7. Ps. 100. 3. Ezek. 34. 11-16.
p Ps. 75. 1.
q Ps. 9. 14.

of His, and "saints," sanctified by His Name upon them. Their blood has been shed like water round the city of peace, so that none was left to bury them. Yet thus they were left to appeal to God in the open sight of heaven,—the crime manifested, earth refusing to cover it (comp. Job xvi. 18; Ezek. xxiv. 8). But so too was the reproach of their helplessness to those round about but without pity for them.

2. They now impute this rightly to Jehovah's anger: but will it be, then, perpetual? These are aliens who disown Him altogether: will He not rather pour it out on these? these who have shown their hostility by devouring Jacob, and laying waste his habitation?

3. Thus for the glory of His Name they can appeal to Him to come in. They acknowledge the sins of their fathers and their own: but the glory of His Name still appeals for their salvation. The nations taunt Him as One not to be found in the day of need: let the avenging of the blood of His servants make Him known.

4. The last section pleads their helplessness. They are as prisoners shut up and under the death sentence: they plead that His mercy may give them life, and that He render seven-fold the reproach with which His adversaries have reproached Him. As His people, the sheep of His pasture, their thankful hearts, from generation to generation, shall show forth His praise.

The psalm is of the simplest character, and needs little labor to make it plain.

Ps. lxxx.

[s]PSALM LXXX.

Revival sought and restoration of the glory of God through the Revived Branch, the Man of His right hand.

To the chief musician; upon a [r]Shoshannim-Eduth: a psalm of Asaph.

1 (1–4): A cry to the divine Shepherd of old. (i.) take the throne. (ii.) in the old relationship, for salvation. (iii.) turn us and shine on us! (iv.) who wait on Thee.

GIVE ear, O [t]Shepherd of Israel, that leddest* Joseph like a flock:
thou that [t]sittest* [above] the cherubim, shine forth!
Before [u]Ephraim, and Benjamin, and Manasseh,
stir up thy strength, and come for our salvation.
[v]Turn us again, O God!
and cause thy face to [w]shine, and we shall be saved.
Jehovah, God of hosts,
[x]how long shall thine anger smoke against the prayer of thy people?

r Ps. 45, 69, titles.
s Ps. 77. 20. Ps. 78. 52.
t 2 Sa. 22. 11. 2 Sa. 6. 2. Ps. 99. 1.
u Nu. 2. 18–23.
v verses 7, 19. Lam. 5. 21.
w Nu. 6. 25. Dan. 9. 17. Ps. 67. 1.
x Ps. 79. 5.

* Present participles in both cases—"leading," "sitting": but the reference is to the past.

PSALM LXXX.

The outburst in the eightieth psalm is singularly beautiful. It is still a prayer, and as to much of it a lamentation, but Israel has caught sight of the way of blessing, and is proportionately expectant of the blessing itself. Even the Targum finds Messiah in it, and the title "upon Shoshannim-Eduth," or "concerning the lilies of testimony," reminds us of what we have had, with some variations, in the forty-fifth, sixtieth, and sixty-ninth psalms, already. Christ and His people are here together again, and their testimony, while so different as to the witnesses themselves, combines in absolute perfection in the final result, in which God does indeed, according to the burden of the repeated prayer, "shine forth,"—and for more than Israel. Her revival—the turning of her heart to Him,—and the preparation of the Branch in and through which the nation alone revives,—are all of Him. He is the Saviour-God, the God and Father of Him in whom salvation is wrought out and comes into their possession, as into ours.

1. The psalm opens with a cry to the Divine Shepherd who of old led Joseph like a flock. The reference is to the wilderness journey to the promised land, and the mention of Joseph in this prominence has nothing to do with the divided kingdom of Israel long afterward, which by the fact of its division separated itself from the cherubic throne as here referred to. The true reason of Joseph's prominence has been already shown in the seventy-eighth psalm. After Reuben's loss of the birth-right for his sin, it came naturally to Joseph, Rachel's first-born, the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh being the two-fold witness of this, as well as the tabernacle in Shiloh in the land of Ephraim. This lasted till the captivity of the ark in Eli's time, when Ichabod was written upon the nation; and out of this ruin emerged a new state of things, the prominence of Judah and the divine choice of Zion and David. It is no wonder, therefore, that Asaph, going back to the beginning of the nation, as he does, should make Joseph prominent. With the kingdom of the ten tribes, with which many would for this reason connect these psalms, Asaph had nothing to do.

It is natural for the psalmist to go back to the wilderness, when the tribes advancing under their Almighty Leader were preparing to take possession of their land. He is looking now to another possession of it, when the whole nation would come into line once more, following their great Shepherd. But for this He must take the throne as of old, and in the old relationship, as when the ark went before the tribes of Rachel's offspring, its accustomed place. But for this they too must be turned to Him; and, (just because they are in fact turning, but

2 (5-7): The breach! (i.) Thy gift! (ii.) the breach manward. (iii.) turn us and shine on us!

Thou hast [y]fed them with the bread of tears,
and given them tears to drink in large measure.
Thou hast made us a strife unto our neighbors,
and our enemies have us in [z]derision.
[a]Turn us again, O God of hosts,
and cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.

y Ps. 42. 3. *cf.* Is. 30.20.
z *cf.* De. 28. 37. Ps. 44. 13.
a verses 3, 19.

3 (8-11): The people set apart to God. (i.) the beginning, in divine power. (ii.) rooting and increase. (iii.)elevation and glory. (iv.) territorial completeness.

Thou broughtest a [b]vine out of Egypt:
thou didst [c]cast out the nations, and plantedst it.
Thou preparedst room before it,
and it took [d]deep root and filled the land.
The [e]mountains were covered with its shadow,
and its branches were [like] mighty cedars.
It sent out its boughs unto the [f]sea.
and its roots unto the river.

b Is. 5. 1-7. Ex. 15. 17.
c Deu. 7. 1. Ps. 44. 2.
d *cf.* Josh. 23. 14. *cf.* 1Ki. 4.29.
e *cf.* Josh. 17. 14-18.
f *cf.* Ps. 72.8.

4 (12-16): Ruin: (i.) the cause.

Why hast thou [g]broken down its inclosure,
so that all who pass by the way may pluck it?

g Ps. 89. 40. Nah. 2. 2.

in the consciousness of their own feebleness of will and waywardness, with their old history facing them—starting aside as a deceitful bow,) they ask, in the person of the psalmist, to *be* turned. God alone could make effective this desire of theirs. The work in them, as the work *for* them, must be His: the two, therefore, are joined together in the cry, "Turn us again, O God! cause Thy face to shine on us, and we shall be saved."

But with this comes also the consciousness of His present and long-continued anger. How long shall it continue to smoke against those who cry to Him? Their present circumstances are a sorrowful contrast to that glorious time to which they are looking back.

2. This leads to a sorrowful pleading of their condition. He who was once their Shepherd has fed them with the bread of tears, and given them in abundance tears to drink. And this breach has made them a matter of contention to their neighbors, a derision to those hostile to them. And again they utter their sad, yet expectant cry: "Turn us again, O God of hosts; and cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved."

3. This is, however, but a preface to a longer pleading, in which their case is set before God. They go back to the deliverance out of Egypt, in which He had separated them to Himself for fruit. The vine is good for nothing else but fruit, and with its trailing branches is the very image of dependence. The prophet Isaiah (chap. v.) uses the same figure in the same way, although speaking from the divine side, as the psalmist does from the human; and the brief appeal in Jeremiah (ii. 21) is similar to Isaiah. Here the appeal is to God on the ground of what He had done for them, that that work should not be in vain.

He had brought a vine out of Egypt.—brought it out, as is implied, to yield Him fruit: shall it not yield Him fruit? He had dispossessed nations, to make way for it; and He having made room, it rooted itself and filled the land. Next, we see its glory: it rose, shadowing the mountains, with a growth as solid as the mighty cedars. Lastly, we have its extension to the sea and to the River (Euphrates),—in these directions its divinely-given boundaries.

4. But in spite of all this progress, ruin had followed where success seemed fully assured. The causes of this are shown in Isaiah to be moral and spiritual failure on the part of the people. It was not possible that the failure could be in God. He could appeal to themselves whether He could have done anything for His vineyard that He had not done. Yet when He looked for His vine to bring forth grapes, it brought forth wild grapes. All His care and cultivation of it had gone for nothing in the result: why, then, should He go on with it? He tells them, therefore, what He will do in consequence of all this: "I will

(ii.) enemies.
The boar out of the wood doth [h] ravage it;
and the wild beasts of the field feed on it.
(iii.) return!
Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts:
look down from heaven, and behold, and [i] visit this vine;
(iv.) to Thy creature.
And the stock which thy right hand hath planted,
and the branch that thou madest strong for [j] thyself.
(v.) governmental dealing.
It is burned with fire, it is cut down:
they perish at the rebuke of [k] thy countenance.

h *ctr.* Lev. 26. 6. *cf.* Is. 18. 5, 6.
i *cf.* Ex. 3. 16. Ps. 65. 9. Zech. 10. 3.
j *cf.* Ezek. 20. 9, 14, 22. *cf.* Is. 61. 3. *cf.* Is. 44. 23.
k Ps. 6. 1.

take away the hedge thereof," He says, "and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down, and I will lay it waste." It is this action of God which the psalmist sees, and which he laments. He says nothing directly of the moral causes: they are implied, no doubt, in the very need which they now have of Him; but his argument goes back of all this, to the Immutable God and His purposes. He leaves out the people, as if they were of no account. Certainly, when God took them up, He knew what was in man: He could not be deceived. He had brought this vine out of Egypt; He had taken abundance of pains with it. He had linked Himself openly, before the eyes of men, with this people of His choice. After all, could *He* be defeated? It is the argument of Moses in the wilderness, when God proposes to him that the people should be consumed as a stiff-necked people, and He would make of Moses himself a great nation. Nay, says Moses, "then the Egyptians shall hear it, (for Thou broughtest up this people in Thy might from among them,) and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land, . . . and the nations that have heard the fame of Thee will speak, saying, Because Jehovah was not able to bring this people into the land which He sware unto them, therefore He hath slain them in the wilderness" (Num. xiv. 13–16).

Here is the same effectual argument, in which the sin of the people itself is omitted, to plead with God as to the undoing of His own acts, as if it were mutability in the Immutable, or powerlessness in the Omnipotent. "Why hast Thou broken down its inclosure, so that all who pass by the way may pluck it? The boar out of the wood doth ravage it, and the wild beasts of the field feed on it."

So he cries now to God as the all-powerful, "the God of hosts" ready at all times to execute His will, to return and visit this vine, which through His power alone had been all that it had ever been—"the stock which Thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that Thou madest strong for Thyself." It is here that the Targum renders, "and upon the King Messiah, whom Thou hast established for Thyself." Literally it is "the son," but which in relation to a vine would be a branch, according to Hebrew usage. Delitzsch and Moll apply it still to the nation, as they do also the expressions in verse 18; the Christian here falling behind the Jewish expositor, and the point and power of the closing appeal being lost. The psalm thus becomes tame and colorless enough.

Doubtless, "the Son of man, whom Thou madest strong for Thyself," is intended to remind us of the previous "branch" or "son, whom Thou madest strong for Thyself": but the argument can work also the other way. God does, as we know, call Israel His son, and the first passage could in that way be explained of the nation; but the Son of man, and Man of God's right hand, cannot be made so to apply according to Scripture, while the first title expressly and the second by the easiest possible inference apply to Christ: who is also as plainly the "Branch" which is strengthened of God for Himself. And here is Israel's hope, as well as the hope of any. The place of the psalm in this series, and the numerical structure also, are in the fullest confirmation of this application, which alone gives worthy meaning to the whole.

Yet the "branch" of verse 15 may not be directly Christ, but David's house, with

5 (17-19): Immanuel. (i.) power in Him.

(ii.) and security.

(iii.) turn us and shine on us!

Let thy hand be on the [l]man of thy right hand:
upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself.
So will we not go back from thee:
[m]quicken us, and we will call upon thy Name.
[n]Turn us again, Jehovah, God of Hosts!
make thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.

l cf. Ps. 89. 21. *cf.* Is. 42. 1-4.

m Ps. 85. 4.

n vers. 3, 7.

the desolation of which the promise connected with it would seem in danger of being lost; and this interpretation preserves consistency throughout. With the seed of David the national hope is plainly identified; and Christ is, according to the flesh, the seed of David.

All seems to be over: "it is burned with fire, it is cut down: they perish at the rebuke of Thy countenance." God seems to be against Himself, undoing the work which He has done. But it is the sense of man's ruin which, after all, enables the soul to rise to the conception of the divine thoughts, and the psalmist concludes with renewed confidence.

5. The number 5, in its essential significance of "man with God," breathes here, assuredly, the Name of Names, "Immanuel." And it is with this that the fifth section begins. While the language is still that of prayer, yet faith has risen to clear sight of the answer. "The Man of Thy right hand" may connect itself with Benjamin, but only as Benjamin is connected typically with Christ. Benjamin speaks indeed, as we have elsewhere seen, of Christ in power upon earth, and God's hand upon Him cannot surely be in wrath, as some have suggested, but to strengthen or put Him in the place which is His due. The direct reference is to the 110th psalm, "Sit Thou on My right hand," for Christians a scripture easy enough to read in this connection, even if we had not the confirmation of the latter half of the verse.

"The Son of man" was, as we know, the title which the Lord most commonly assumed. It was that which proclaimed Him in wider sympathy than merely with the Jew, His nature truly human, and come into humanity by the lowly entrance by which other men come, though that for Him indeed implied a miracle. Thus He was fit to be also the Judge of men (Jno. v. 27), and as such comes in the clouds of heaven to His kingdom. Here is One whom God has indeed "made strong for Himself"; and God's hand setting Him in His place is the proclamation of the hour that strikes for Israel's deliverance.

Thus all is in harmony. Power is in His hands for them, and in His hands only who has made atonement in the Manhood He has taken; and in Him, too, is security for the future which nothing else could give. Saved with so marvelous a salvation, they may now say without self-confidence, "So will we not go back from Thee"; and in recognition of the need of the Spirit's work,—"quicken us, and we will call upon Thy Name."

Once more the cry, but with increased confidence to Him who has made the Son of man strong for Himself:—"Turn us again, Jehovah, God of hosts! make Thy face to shine on us, and we shall be saved."

Psalm LXXXI.

The connection of the eighty-first psalm with the preceding one is as simple as it is beautiful. Israel has been crying for God's face to shine upon her as of old: here it does shine upon her. As the result *she* shines: for this new moon, clothing itself again with the glory of the sun, is her own symbol. The blowing of the trumpets at the beginning of the seventh month is the first of the series of set times which speak of *Israel's* blessing (Lev. xxiii., *notes*). Passover, the Sheaf of First-fruits, Pentecost—that is, the Cross, the Resurrection, and the Coming of the Holy Ghost, (the Christian endowment,)—are some time past; and the seventh month speaks of the time for the completion of the divine purposes having arrived, which necessarily, therefore, brings Israel once more to the

Ps. lxxxi.

[4]PSALM LXXXI.

The new ways that go with the new experience.

To the chief musician: upon the [o]Gittith: [a psalm] of Asaph.

1 (1-3): The beginning of the year. (i.) power in grace. (ii.) accompaniment. (iii.) the renewal of Israel.

SING joyously unto God our [p]strength:
make a joyful noise unto the God of [q]Jacob.
Take up a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel:
the pleasant harp with the lute.
Blow the [r]trumpet in the new moon:
at the set time*, for our [s]feast-day.

o Ps. 8, title.
p Ps. 28. 7-9. Ps. 140. 7.
q Ps. 84. 8.
r Nu. 10. 10. Lev. 23. 24. *cf.* Ezra 3. 10.
s Nu. 29. 1,7, 12. *cf.* Is. 27. 13. *cf.* Joel 2. 15-32.

* Or, perhaps, "at the full moon."

fore-front. In the blowing of trumpets we hear the voice of her recall; in the day of atonement—though this naturally links itself with the past, for the day of atonement has *really* begun long before they come into it,—their sins as a nation are taken away from them in the ordinance of the scape-goat; and in the feast of tabernacles we find them in permanent blessing in the land, remembering their wilderness-wanderings (which for so many centuries now have been renewed to them) as past forever.

The new moon, therefore, is Israel's own symbol. The light is beginning to shine upon her: she, therefore, is beginning to reflect it; and here the beauty and evangelical character of this eighty-first psalm become fully apparent. As a *fourth* psalm of this series, it speaks of man's walk,—of the practical life,—and this is evident in the psalm itself: it speaks of what Israel's ways should have been, and of what, alas, they were; but the God who spake to them of old is afresh speaking to them, afresh inviting them to obedience. But how, then, is that obedience to be rendered? how are they to escape the recurrence of that terrible departure from Him, under the shadow of which they have been for so many generations? Here the psalm itself can give us no plain speech. It simply gives and ends with the invitation. For us who have realized the law to be only the condemnation of man, there can be no hope if we think of man. He has been weighed in the balances and found wanting. And there is no difference between men: "as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." The gospel thus comes to us as helpless—"lost"—and casts us altogether upon grace,—that is, upon God, for all that is to come. If the blood of Christ avails alone for our sins before God, it is this also which, applied in the power of the Spirit, reconciles the heart to God, and makes the life the expression of the reconciliation. Grace becomes, not only our deliverance from condemnation, but our sufficiency for all the way. And this the beautiful type of the new moon expresses; the life must be the outshining of that which has first *shone in*. It is not by effort, and it is not a peradventure, if the moon shine. Men can predict it, and know certainly how it is effected. The light is derived —dependent: that which is received is reflected and shed abroad; and this is the light of all God's witnesses.

1. The feast of trumpets is the beginning of Israel's civil year; and this naturally connects itself with that national restoration which is implied in its three "set times." The jubilee, when it occurred, began on the tenth of the same month, after their sins had been removed by the scape-goat carrying them into a "land cut off." The civil year waited for these *national* feasts, and thus was parted from the sacred year, which presents God's order, and began with the passover. But the passover was a *family* ordinance, not (in the strict sense) national. All the nation did not keep it at the same time, but there was a second day appointed for those defiled with the dead or on a journey. Its aspect, therefore, is what the apostle's word to the jailer declared: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and *thy house*." Israel, as a nation, refused the passover, and thus the disjointing between their civil and religious years.

2 (4, 5): The testimony. (i.) an ordinance of grace. (ii.) in view of their deliverance.
3 (6, 7): A divine putting in remembrance. (i.) power that wrought for them. (ii.) in answering deliverance.

For this is a statute for Israel,
an ordinance of the God of Jacob.
He [s]appointed it in Joseph [for] a testimony,
when he had gone out against the [t]land of Egypt;
[where] I heard a [u]language that I knew not.

I removed his shoulder from the burden:
his hands were [v]freed from the basket.
Thou calledst in [w]distress, and I delivered thee;
I answered thee in the secret place of [x]thunder;
I proved thee at the waters of [y]Meribah. Selah.

[s] *cf.* Lev. 23. 2, etc.
[t] Ex. 11.4,5.
[u] Ps. 114. 1.
[v] Ex. 3.7,8.
[w] Ps. 50. 15. Ps. 107. 6.
[x] Ex. 19. 16.
[y] Ex. 17.1–7. Nu. 20.1–13.

In the prophetic application of this psalm, therefore, Israel's national life is now truly beginning. Praise is in their heart and on their lips: God is celebrated as their strength and as the God of Jacob. Power has come in for them in grace, and this is the key-note of their joyful song; with which, as we have so often seen in the case of Israel, nature finds its voice in accompaniment.

Let them sound the trumpet, then, in the new moon, at the set time, for their feast-day.* The blowing of trumpets may be itself the feast here spoken of; or this feast may be the feast of tabernacles. This last was but the fulfillment of the promise of the former, and therefore the passing over of the day of atonement (which Delitzsch objects against this interpretation) is readily accounted for. The feast of tabernacles was, so to speak, really the fullness of that which in the new moon was beginning to appear. In the time spoken of in it, Israel would be enjoying the presence of God; the brightness of His glory would be upon her: and this at the "set time" which proclaimed the foresight and purposes of eternal Wisdom, which could not be disappointed, because they could not be defeated. Therefore the trumpets may indeed be blown, and the whole earth, now to come into blessing, echo Israel's joy.

2. The ordinance itself bears witness of the God of grace, who would thus keep that which His goodness would accomplish for them and in them before the eyes of His people. Looking back to the beginning of the nation, as is so constantly the case in these psalms, Joseph is still the representative of the tribes, and we have seen for what reason. The past deliverance out of Egypt is naturally connected with it, as the anticipation and pledge of the deliverance to come; as the foreign language that they had heard there is the suggestion of the many languages they have since had to learn in the many lands in which they have been made to sojourn since. But in all these at last they shall praise Him with joyful lips.

3. The Lord's voice now makes itself heard, and to the end of the psalm it is He that is heard alone. The psalmist becomes here a prophet in the highest sense, therefore. The two verses that follow are an appeal to their hearts by putting them in remembrance of that old deliverance. It becomes more direct as it goes on.

"I removed his shoulder from the burden," says their divine Redeemer:

* Here, however, there are different renderings and interpretations to be considered. Instead of "at the set time," most, perhaps, would now say, "at the full moon"; and this is a point very difficult to decide. Happily, it is also not very important. If we take it so, the "feast-day" spoken of will be in the middle of the month, whether it be the passover or the feast of tabernacles. This only adds to the significance (if it be correct) of what the new moon promises.

The passover is contended for on account of the fifth verse. Neither new moon nor tabernacles was instituted at the time that Jehovah "went forth against," or "over," "the land of Egypt"; but that verse in no wise requires to be understood in this way. The exact expression, with only a change of pronoun (*betzehtham;* "in *their* going forth," instead of *betzehtho,* "in his going forth"), occurs in Josh. v. 4, where the common version has "*after* they came out of Egypt," and that is certainly the sense.

The reference to the time of their deliverance does not at all necessitate that the feast should be that of the passover, as the exposition of the psalm as given above, should be enough to prove.

4 (8-12): The test under which they failed of old. (i.) the call to obedience. (ii.) in refusal of other gods. (iii.) their portion with Him. (iv.) their apostasy. (v.) the recompense.

5 (13-16): Israel with God. (i.) a persuasive to obedience. (ii.) results as to their enemies.

Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee:
O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me,
There shall no [a]strange god be with thee:
nor shalt thou worship any foreign god.
[b]I am Jehovah thy God,
who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt:
[c]open wide thy mouth, and I will fill it.
But my people did [d]not hearken unto my voice,
and Israel would none of me.
So I [e]gave them up to the stubbornness of their hearts,
and they walked in their [f]own counsels.

Oh [g]that my people would hearken unto my voice,—
that Israel would walk in my ways!
I should soon [h]subdue their enemies,
and turn my hand against their [i]oppressors.

a Ex. 20. 3. Josh. 24. 14. *cf.* Ps. 16. 4, 5.
b Ex. 20. 2. Lev. 26. 1, 13.
c Is. 55. 1-3.
d Ps. 95. 10.
e Hos. 5. 15. *cf.* Hos. 4. 17.
f *cf.* Rom. 1. 24, 26, 28.
g Deu. 5. 29. Deu. 32. 29. Is. 48. 18. *cf.* Matt. 23. 37.
h *cf.* Ju. 2. 1-3.
i *cf.* Lev. 26. 7, 8.

"their hands were freed from the basket" (the task-basket for the removal of clay and bricks). From such hard and servile labor He had freed them, from a distress in which their cry had gone up to Him by reason of their bondage. They had cried, and He delivered them: He had answered them in the Cloud of His Presence from which He looked in wrath upon their enemies—"the secret place of thunder," which they themselves had heard at Sinai. At the waters of Meribah also, where the smitten rock had poured out water for them, He had proved them by an intervention which answered their very murmurings with the witness of abiding love.

4. Thus they had been cared for up to Sinai itself; and these were the circumstances under which He spoke to them, demanding but (what should have been so easy to them) their allegiance to One who had manifested His power over the false gods of the nations, and in such perfect goodness toward themselves. He repeats now the essence of it, in a new appeal: for grace of necessity calls for obedience, and without this no blessing were possible. Grace, too, it had been with them of old, until their fatal self-sufficiency had made them take up a legal covenant to their ruin; but for grace they were not ready.

Yet the terms were made all that divine love could make them: love appealing in them for that answer of love for which it had wrought; and still love appeals for that without which it cannot be satisfied. "Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto Me; there shall no strange god be with thee: nor shalt thou worship any foreign god. I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open wide thy mouth, and I will fill it."

How blessed to know that still, if we but yield Him our heart, we may assure ourselves of the fullest satisfaction from Him! "Open wide thy mouth" is what He bids us; and it is but obedience, therefore, to do this. Love will believe Him, and satisfy itself at this free fountain.

Israel, alas, fell away, as the Lord now reminds them: "My people did not hearken unto Me; and Israel would none of Me." It was not merely failure: it was *revolt*. And the recompense could not but follow: "So I gave them up to the stubbornness of their hearts, and they walked in their own counsels." The saddest thing that men can be left to is what is here expressed.

5. But now He returns to the yearning of His heart over them: "Oh that My people would hearken unto Me" now, He says,—"that Israel would walk in My ways!" And then He proceeds to speak of the blessed conseqnences. How soon would their enemies be put down. Jehovah, a living fence aronnd them, would make those cringe before Him who, in being *their* haters, would be His; while their time would be forever (comp. 1 Jno. ii. 17). Finally, the land

(iii.) Jehovah round about.

(iv.) the experience of the creature.

The haters of Jehovah would *i* cringe before him,
but their time would be for *k* ever.
He would feed them also with the *l* fat of the wheat,
and with *m* honey from the rock I would satisfy thee.

i *cf.* Ps. 18. 44. Ps. 66. 3. Ps. 68. 30.
k *cf.* Deu. 7. 9.
l Ps. 147. 14.
m Deu. 32. 13, 14.

Ps. lxxxii.

[5] PSALM LXXXII.

God judging among the judges.

A psalm of Asaph.

1 (i, 2): The challenge as to righteousness. (i) "gods," (ii.) in contradiction with their position.

GOD *n* standeth in the assembly of the Mighty One*:
he judgeth among the gods.
How long shall ye judge *o* unjustly,
and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah.

n *cf.* Ps. 50. 1, 6.
o Lev. 19. 15. *cf.* 1 Sa. 8. 1–5.

* El.

would yield them fat of the wheat and honey from the rock, the tender care of the Creator for the creature He had made.

There the psalm ends, and we are left to find the assurance of the actual blessing that we look for from that prophetic ordinance with which it began. The new moon with its returning light speaks, as we have seen, not only of the favor of God toward Israel returning, but of the nation also reflecting back the light. And that is the method of grace in producing holiness, love begetting love. "God," says the apostle, "who made the light to shine out of darkness, hath *shined in our hearts*, to *give out* the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6, *Gr.*).

But there is another witness to the evangelical character of the psalm that is found in the title. We have already had "upon the Gittith" in that of the eighth psalm, and saw reason there to believe that in its fullest significance it speaks of the joy born from sorrow in the work of the Cross (p. 38, *notes*). If this be so, there is exact accordance between the two psalms in this respect. The work of atonement is not explicitly referred to in either of them, while it underlies both; and thus the grace which is seen in the re-appearing of the moon here finds its only stable foundation. It is the power and value of the blood of the Lamb that the joy of Israel's New Year's Day attests. Thus can the glory of God shine forth again upon them: it is in very deed the "glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ": and the salvation so attained is neither a merely external nor a temporary salvation. It is that salvation to the uttermost which every soul receives that comes in its ruin and helplessness "unto God by Him."

Psalm LXXXII.

Because God is returning in grace to Israel, however, judgment must take its course against stubborn wrong-doers; and these are (alas) especially they who have occupied the places of rule and judgment among them. The wresting of judgment must be stopped with a strong hand, and the places of authority purged from their defilement with evil. And for this God Himself must take the judgment-seat and rule among men: and this He is ready to do, not alone in Israel, though beginning there, but over all the earth.

1. He stands, therefore, in the midst of what is His own assembly, and which is now to be the seat of power upon earth, the assembly of El, the Mighty One, in truth. He is there for judgment among the "gods," a term which the Lord defines for us from this very psalm (ver. 6) as "those to whom the word of God came" (Jno. x. 35),—that is, who were commissioned to represent Him—the judges of Israel. They were thus identified with Him whom they represented, and were responsible in the most solemn way to represent Him in His character also, both in His righteousness and in His love to men.

Here then is the ground of His challenge to them, and in the first place as to

2 (3, 4): The challenge as to salvation. (i.) in righteousness, (ii.) from the wicked.

3 (5): The reality.

4 (6, 7): Failing, they fall. (i.) their position. (ii.) contrasted doom.

5 (8): Let God Himself judge!

Judge the [p]weak and fatherless:
do justice to the afflicted and destitute:
[q]Rescue the weak and needy:
deliver them out of the hand of the wicked.

They know [r]not, neither do they understand;
they walk on in darkness:
all the [s]foundations of the earth are moved.

I had said, [t]Ye are gods:
even children of the Highest are ye all;
Nevertheless ye shall [u]die like men,
and fall like one of the princes.

[v]Arise, O God! judge the earth:
for *thou* shalt [w]inherit all the nations.

p cf. Ps.72.4.
q Is. 58. 6, 7. *cf.* Is. 1. 23.
r Ps. 14. 4.
s Ps. 11. 3. *cf.* Jer.5.30, 31.
t Jno.10. 34–36. Ex. 22. 28.
u Ps. 49. 20. Is. 1. 31. Is. 2. 22.
v Ps. 74. 22. *cf.* Ps.96.12, 13.
w Ps. 22. 28. Zech. 14. 9. *cf.* Ps. 2. 8.

what is first—the fundamental thing in judgment: it must be *righteous* judgment. Here is what must govern in the manifestation of love itself. And so the first appeal is: "How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked?" Their conduct was in flagrant contradiction to their position as representatives of the Righteous God, and with whom is "no respect of persons."

2. But this cared for, they must manifest Him also on His *salvation* side, in His regard for the poor, the weak, the defenceless, and the oppressed. "Judge the weak and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and destitute." It must be still justice: that must not be violated even in pity to the poor; and there was a special commandment as to this (Exod. xxiii. 3). Yet his poverty should nevertheless make him an object of special and tender interest: "Rescue the weak and needy: deliver him out of the hand of the wicked."

3. But the state of things is apparent. There is no heart, and therefore no knowledge: "they know not, neither do they understand": they are in darkness, for they are not with God, and God is light. But they do not need light for their course: their want of knowledge does not bring them to a stand;—"they walk on in darkness." Thus "all the foundations of the earth"—judgment and mercy which establish it—"are removed." There is nowhere any moral stability.

4. Thus failing in justice, the perverters of it must themselves fail and pass away. Their position is a lofty one. They are, as it were, gods: children of the Highest, every one of them. But that will be no security: they shall fall like the mere earthly princes that are anywhere found. The movement of the foundations must bring down—little as they may believe it,—their own house in ruins also.

5. Who shall succeed them? Is there to be only an endless succession of men like these? Nay, the earth groans and longs for God Himself. *He* must arise; and He will. There is no resource but in Him: no refuge for the creature but in God. "Arise, O God! judge the earth." And that is what shall be: the earth is His; and He shall take His inheritance; not Israel only; but with Israel, all the nations. Thank God, that blessed time is surely almost at the doors.

Psalm LXXXIII.

Israel being now set right within, the tempest may roar against her; but there is no rotten core any more, to make the tree break. Still, she must find, but she shall find, her resource in God. The eighty-third psalm closes the series with a great confederacy of the nations hurling itself against Israel's shield, only to be dashed in ruin from it; and Jehovah is thus made known in all the earth in His supremacy of power.

Ps. lxxxiii.

[6]PSALM LXXXIII.

Victory over the last assault of evil.

A Song, a Psalm of Asaph.

1 (1-4): Rebellion. (i.) the appeal to power.

(ii.) enemies astir.

(iii.) against His hidden ones.

(iv.) that Israel fail from the earth.

2 (5-8): The alliance. (i.) against God with one heart. (ii.) races kindred to Israel? (iii.) possessors of the inheritance??

O GOD, keep not silence:
[x]hold not thy peace, and be not still, O Mighty One.
For lo, thine enemies make a [y]tumult:
and they that hate thee have lifted up the head.
Against thy people they take [z]crafty counsel:
and consult together against thy [a]hidden ones.
They have said, Come, and let us [b]cut them off from being a nation:
that the name of Israel be no more remembered.

For they have consulted together with one heart:
against thee do they make a [c]covenant:
The tents of [d]Edom and the [e]Ishmaelites;
of [f]Moab and the Hagarites;
[g]Gebal, and [h]Ammon, and [i]Amalek;
[j]Philistia with the inhabitants of [k]Tyre.

x Ps. 35. 22. *cf.* Ps. 50. 3, 21.
y *cf.* Ps. 2.1. Ps. 46. 6.
z Ps. 71. 10.
a *cf.* Ps.27.5. *cf.* Ps.31.20.
b *cf.* Jer. 10. 24. 25 with Jer. 46. 28.
c *cf.* Zech.14. 1-3.
d *cf.* Obad. 7 -10.
e Gen. 16.11, 12.
f *cf.* Is. chps. 15, 16.
g *cf.* Ezek. 27. 9.
h *cf.* Ezek. 21. 28-32. *cf.* 2 Chr.20. 1.
i *cf.* Ex.17. 8 -16.
j *cf.* Ps. 60.8.
k *cf.* Is. 23.

1. In the first section the case is stated which demands the intervention of God. The nations of the earth are in rebellion against Him, and the psalmist cries for Him to act and not be still. His enemies are all astir, and full of anticipated triumph. They are in movement against the people of God, through whom alone they can attack Him; but who are hidden from them in a safe place of shelter, which they discern not,—which they must be made to realize. They mean nothing less than to cut off Israel as a nation from the face of the earth, and cause the very memory of them to be lost.

2. The allied foes are now enumerated, compacted together in covenant against God Himself. They are Israel's immediate neighbors, as far as we know them, and indeed, largely their kindred, with Philistia and Tyre, who were in the borders of their land. One power only beyond these is mentioned, as aiding and abetting, rather than instigating, the attack: and that is Assyria. Israel's foes are thus all round her: Edom, Ishmael, and Moab in the south; Ammon and Amalek on the east; the Philistines and Tyrians on the west coast; and Assyria to the north. There are two not certainly known.—Gebal and the Hagarenes or Hagarites. The last stand, in the second member of the sixth verse, over against Ishmael in the first place, and in the same connection with Moab as Ishmael with Edom. Were they, perhaps, as their name might intimate, but a branch of the Ishmaelites themselves, which had attained a similar independence of the original tribe to that which the Amalekites held in regard to Edom? This, which is easily conceivable of these wandering peoples, seems the most probable conjecture, though it is but that. Gebal is only mentioned here, if that in Ezek. xxvii. 9 (and which was the seat of the Giblites of Josh. xiii. 5.) is different.

The names, as a whole, are difficult to connect, as is generally sought, with any event in Israel's past history, which (if it could be established) would not, of course, prevent an application to that prophetic future with which these psalms are so evidently connected. It is, as we know, the commonest thing, if not the rule, to make some impending historical event the text of a prediction as to the latter days. But it is also difficult in many ways to connect an irruption of these peoples, most of whom have disappeared long since, with Israel's prophetic history, as far as we have yet come to an understanding of it. That there is a revival of many of the old nations in the last days, and a replacement of them in

(iv.) the world-power as such.
3 (9-12): Treat them as the revival of the old seizers on the dwellings of God.
(i.) in congruous righteousness.
(ii.) their destruction
(iii.) their "anointed."
(iv.) the conduct provoking this.
4 (13-15): Prove their weakness.
(i.) before Thy might.

[l] Asshur also is joined with them; *l cf.* Mi. 5. 5, 6.
they have helped* the children of Lot. Selah.

Do unto them as unto [m] Midian; *m cf.* Ju.7.7, 8.
as to [n] Sisera, as to Jabin, at the brook Kishon, *n cf.* Ju.4.15, 16.
Who perished at Endor:
they became dung for the ground.
Make their nobles like [o] Oreb and like Zeeb; *o* Ju. 7. 25.
and all their leaders† like to [p] Zebah and Zalmunna: *p* Ju. 8. 4-12.
Who said, Let us take to ourselves in possession
the habitations of God.

O my God, make them as a whirling thing—
as [q] stubble before the wind. *q* Ps. 68. 1, 2. Ps. 35. 5.

* *Literally,* "been an arm to." † "Anointed ones."

the positions they occupied of old, is clear, and has begun even to be fulfilled before our eyes, as in the case of the Greek and the Italian kingdoms. Many of the scattered tribes which are classed in general under the common name of Arabs, may be Moabites, Ammonites, and such like. In all this there is no very great difficulty. On the other hand, while the Assyrian is prominent in Isaiah in connection with Israel's troubles in the latter day, the list of the nations that come with Gog against her (as given in Ezek. xxxviii., xxxix.) is plainly different, and they are much further off than what are enumerated here. We must leave the precise application of what is here, therefore, in uncertainty. The day will declare it; for of its being a prophecy of the last times there can be no reasonable doubt. Rather than an attack of distant enemies, however, it is an attempted settlement of old scores with Israel on the part of neighboring and kindred races. With the exception of Assyria, Israel is to possess herself of all this territory; and such an attack on their part may naturally lead to this.

As to the numerical structure, it is not strange that (with so much else uncertain) there should be room for much uncertainty as to the meaning of it. If the Hagarenes are really but an independent section of Ishmael, then those named in the second verse are all of Israelitish kin. The third verse is much more doubtful, as Ammon had her land expressly preserved for her, along with Moab and Edom. This is the main difficulty; for Gebal may after all be the Phœnician Gebal of Ezekiel and Joshua, and would then be within the limits of Israel's original inheritance; and Amalek, being condemned to utter extinction, would forfeit her land to Israel, and so be within her limits. As to Philistia and Tyre, there can be no question. Finally, the fourth verse seems to have no difficulty in relation to Asshur.

Edom and Moab will (with Ammon) lose what had been reserved for them, and Israel possess their territory also, which comes plainly into their final inheritance; but the very attack upon Israel here predicted would be, as beforesaid, a sufficient reason for this, and thus all would be in harmony. But the exceptional place of Ammon in this enumeration is a difficulty as to all this, to which I have no key, and must leave it as an evident objection.

3. The confederacy is paralleled with Midian's overflow of the land in the days of Gideon, and with Sisera and Jabin, in the time of Deborah. The psalmist prays that their destruction may be like theirs; and their "anointed ones," set apart to special place among them, be like the kings that fell by Gideon's hand. They too would have seized upon the dwelling-places of God in the land, and possessed themselves of His inheritance.

4. He prays that, in the hands of the Mighty God, they may be like chaff or thistle-down whirled by the wind;—that, as the fire catches hold of a wood, or the flame of the volcano sets on fire the mountains, so the anger of God may pursue them and His presence terrify them like the breath of the hurricane. But—

(ii.)in anger—
(iii.) realizing Thy presence

As the [r]fire that burneth a wood,
and as a flame setteth the mountains on fire,
So pursue them with thy tempest,
and terrify them with thy hurricane.

[r] *cf.* Is. 9.4,5. *cf.* Is. 66.15, 16.

5 16–18): That men may come into their place with God.
(i.) congruous dealing.
(ii.) the destruction of foes.
(iii.) that Thy glory may be displayed.

Fill their faces with [s]shame,
that they may seek thy face, Jehovah.
Let them be ashamed and troubled for aye:
yea, let them be confounded and perish;
That they may [t]know that thou, whose name alone is Jehovah,
art the Most High over all the earth.

[s] *cf.* Ps. 48.4–7.

[t] Ps. 59. 13.

5. The end is to be the blessing of man in the exaltation of God,—that man may find his place with God. He must needs be abased for this, and the pride hid from him, that hides the face of God. Yea, the destruction of His foes is to make Him known as Supreme, who is alone Jehovah, the Immutable because the Perfect One. Thus fittingly the psalms of Asaph close.

Subd. 2.

The second subdivision completes the third book. It shows us this holiness of God, which the book speaks throughout, as maintained in the final salvation of Israel through Christ the Mediator. There are but six psalms, and these are divided into three sections of two psalms each. The first section shows us how in the salvation itself God's attributes are displayed united (Ps. lxxxv.), the foundation of their blessing being that God looks upon the face of His Anointed (lxxxiv. 9). In the second, Christ is seen taking the servant's place for this, and owned of God in it as the Unique Man; while the voice of universal praise owns all springs of divine blessing to be in Him. In the third we have, in contrast, the curse under a broken law, and the "sure mercies of David" of which the prophet (Isa. lv. 3) and the apostle speak (Acts xiii. 34); mercies which are unchangeable, because in Christ. The detail we are presently to consider.

Sec. 1.

The two psalms of the first section are both psalms of the sons of Korah, eight of which we had at the commencement of the second book, the suited witnesses of divine grace.

Psalm LXXXIV.

Israel are still away from the courts of Jehovah's house, but their faces and their hearts are thitherward; and if they have not yet the blessedness they long for, they have that of those in whose heart are the ways which lead there. For such the vale of tears becomes a place of springs, and the rain overspreads it with blessings. They go from strength to strength until they all appear at last before God in Zion. But whence comes this security? whence this confidence of heart in God? It is revealed in this, that God is looking on the face of His Anointed. Indeed, we cannot but think, as we read the psalm, of Him who had left the glory which He had with the Father, and has returned to it; though here it is the earthly house of God's rest in Israel that is the goal of these pilgrim feet. Still, whatever be the surroundings, it is God Himself that is sought, as by every soul that has been touched by divine grace; and we have never found any difficulty in translating these intense longings into Christian speech. The Spirit of Christ breathes in them, and unites the hearts of His own in one desire, whatever may be the variety in its expression.

Another testimony to what is in this psalm is found in the *al-haggittith* of the title; which here, as in the eighth and eighty-first psalms, speaks of the joy that springs out of sorrow,—nay, of the surpassing joy that has come to us out of the

SUBDIVISION 2. (Ps. lxxxiv.–lxxxix.)

The holiness of God manifested by Christ as Mediator.

SECTION 1. (Ps. lxxxiv., lxxxv.)

Christ uniting the divine attributes in the salvation of His people.

Ps. lxxxiv.

[1]PSALM LXXXIV.

Jehovah supreme and sufficient for the soul; and Christ the foundation.

To the chief musician, upon the *u* Gittith: a psalm of the sons of *v* Korah.

1 (1, 2): Jehovah of hosts! the living God. (i.) where Thou art! (ii.) heart-longing.

HOW *w* lovely are thy tabernacles,
Jehovah of hosts!
My soul *z* longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of Jehovah:
my heart and my flesh cry out for the *y* living God*.

2 (3): Longing answered.

Yea, the *z* sparrow hath found a house,
and the *a* swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young:
thine *b* altars, Jehovah of hosts, my King and my God.

* El.

u Ps. 8, 81, titles.
v Ps. 42, etc., titles.
w Ps. 26. 8. Ps. 27. 4.
x Ps. 42. 1, 2. Ps. 63. 1.
y *cf.* Jer. 10. 10. Ps. 115. 1–7.
z Ps. 102. 7. *cf.* Mt. 10. 29–31.
a *cf.* Is. 38. 14. *cf.* Jer. 8. 7.
b Ex. 27. 1, etc. Ex. 30. 1, etc.

One great Sorrow (see p. 38). Thus again we recognize the "Anointed," upon whose face Jehovah is besought to look. And this agrees with all that precedes and follows, while it gives fullness of meaning to much that otherwise would lack in definiteness and unity of purpose. This distinctness of outline shows when we have got the focus duly adjusted to the object before us.

1. The cry of heart is after the "living God"—a simple and even a poor expression, one would say; for the least truth to affirm about God is that He is "living." But this only shows how poor are we, who need to remind ourselves that He is this. He, Jehovah of hosts, around Whom move the myriad forces of the universe in sympathetic obedience;—He in Whom, we and all else His creatures, "live and move and have our being,"—He Himself *lives!* Yes we are poor enough even to need the being reminded and to find the consolation of this. And how good a thing is it, in the midst of a world in which evil seems oft to be gaining the day, and when He is silent and still, and we cry, "How long?" but He stirs not,—how good is it then to stay our souls with the assurance, "Yet God liveth"!

The soul here knows, too, that this God is One who draws near to men; yea, in the memory of the past and in the sweet vision of the future, tabernacles among them. Lovely, indeed, the tabernacles of Jehovah of hosts! The very thought of it tells what He is,—that He is—how unspeakably!—gracious. Yet there is distance now, and he who speaks longs, yea, faints with desire, to pass it and to be with Him. His heart and his very flesh cry out for the living God: it is a longing so intense that the body feels and thrills with it.

2. It is a fact "well-known in history, that small birds lived undisturbed within the precincts of the temple" (Moll). How suited a testimony to the Maker of all, who dwelt there! The spirit of the psalmist carries him there now, as if he were one of those unchecked dwellers in Jehovah's courts; and the sparrow and the swallow become figures by which he would have us know what answers there the longings of heart which he has been expressing. He himself is the sparrow that has found a house, the social bird which, as found alone upon the house-top, is the very image of desolation (Ps. cii. 7), but which now has all that heart can desire in nearness to its Maker. How wonderful to know, as we now know, that He, in truth of manhood, has drawn near to *us*, to seek

3 (4): The worship of the House.

4 (5-7): The way thither. (i.) strength for it in God. (ii.) the way transformed.

(iii.) the realization.

Happy are the [c]dwellers in thy house:
they will [d]still be praising thee. Selah.

Happy is the man whose [e]strength is in thee:
in whose [f]heart are the ways.
Passing through the [g]valley of Baca, they make it a place of springs;
yea, the [h]early rain covereth it with blessings.
They go from [i]strength to strength:
every one appeareth before God in Zion.

[c] Ps. 65. 4. Ps. 92. 13.
[d] Ps. 63. 3,4. Ps. 46. 1, 2.
[e] Ps. 27. 1.
[f] *cf.* Ps. 77. 13, 19.
[g] *cf.* Ps. 23. 4.
[h] *cf.* Joel 2. 23. *cf.* Lev. 26. 4.
[i] *cf.* Is. 40. 30, 31.

our companionship! and that we are to be with Him, in all that this implies, forever! Who would not give Him—alas, rather, who *does* give Him aright, that which He seeks for from us and in us? and which we are not to wait for in eternity, but to yield Him now. "I call you not servants," He says, "for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you *friends:* for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you" (Jno. xv. 15). Have we at all entered into this? What would the word of God be to us, if indeed we had! How would its "deep things" delight us, as the Spirit of God within us searched them out! How many of its inmost recesses would be left unpenetrated! And what ecstatic joy would there not be for us! what assurance of faith, of hope, of understanding, would we not gain!

Yet the "sparrow"—two of which are sold for a farthing—speaks also of something else in us which the presence of God would work, and which is every way of the greatest importance, the sense of littleness, yea, of nothingness before Him. The abasing of pride is the surest accompaniment and sign of being brought nigh to Him; "the proud He beholdeth afar off."

The swallow is, according to the meaning of the word (*deror*) the bird of freedom. Its bold, dashing flight and migratory habits naturally speak of this. But this free-roaming bird can be held by its affections; and the "place where she may lay her young" claims her effectually. But the nest here is in a place where no swallow could place hers: faith finds its satisfaction and rest in Jehovah's altars, and these have no prohibition for it, but a welcome and a home.

Thus the link with the title becomes again apparent, and we find how truly it is a psalm "upon the Gittith" which is here. For every Christian heart knows surely what these altars of the sanctuary represent for us. The one efficacious work by which we are reconciled and brought to God is the work of the altar. The blood given upon the altar is that by which atonement for the soul is made; and thus Christ is seen as the answer to the deepest need that we can have, and the One by whom the priestly altar of incense becomes ours, with its sacrifices of praise and of a devoted life.

The happy cry rings out then: "Jehovah of hosts! my King and my God!" How blessed to know that this is our God, on the absolute Throne eternal, changeless in all those attributes upon which faith triumphantly lays hold, and in which it shelters itself from all possible ill.

3. From this it is hardly a transition to the next verse, in which is contemplated the happiness of such dwellers in Jehovah's house. Their constant occupation is that which certifies their blessedness: "they will still be praising Thee." Praise is but overflowing happiness in the soul conscious of whence this comes; and this continually is but joy continual—a perpetual overflow of it. Such will heaven be: and here on earth we find the beginning of it.

4. Israel is not yet at home with God; but they are on the way there, and already experiencing a happiness which is the result of this. The psalmist proceeds to speak of this with assurance. The way *with* God is the way *to* God; and the strength that is found in Him is found in and for the way with Him. "Happy is the man," he says, "whose strength is in Thee: in whose heart are the ways,"—*what* ways the verses following make evident: "who, going through

5 (8-12): Immanu-El. (I.) the God of grace. (II.) Christ the assurance. (III.) the Sanctuary.

Hear my prayer, Jehovah, God of hosts:
give ear, O God of [j] Jacob. Selah.
Behold, O God our [k] shield;
and look upon the face of thine [l] anointed.
For a [m] day in thy courts is better than a thousand:
I had rather stand at the [n] threshold of the house of my God,
than dwell in the [o] tents of wickedness.

j Ps. 81. 1.
k Gen. 15. 1.
l Ps. 2. 2.
m *cf.* Ps. 23. 6.
n *cf.* Ex. 38. 8.
o *cf.* Lk. 16. 19-31.

the valley of Baca, make it a place of springs; yea, the early rain covereth it with blessings. They go from strength to strength: every one appeareth before God in Zion."

The ways of pilgrims leading up to the city of God are certainly, therefore, what is meant. The valley of Baca is no literal place, but figurative, just as is that which is spoken of it. And so, if the name be taken from the *baca*-shrub, from which, if wounded, a tear-like liquid exudes, there is none the less clear an intentional connection with *bacah*, "weeping." The "place of springs" and the "rain" are naturally also an antithesis to this; and altogether they furnish such a picture as will appeal to any one of God's pilgrims in any dispensation. For all, His miracles of grace are wrought; just as for all who seek strength in Him alone, that strength must prove its sufficiency for all demands upon it. Trial is found, and sorrow, and humiliation; but amid all this are found the sources of plenteous refreshment. How but in a world of sorrow could we have fellowship with the Man of sorrows! How else could we realize the perfection of His path who has "left us an example, that we should walk in His steps"? And then, what spiritual transformations are effected by the direct out-pouring of the rain of heaven!

So "they go from strength to strength:" in the experience of strength all through, even while it leave us in ourselves the consciousness of perfect weakness—and it will, and ought; for so is it plain that the strength is ministered, and is of God; and the tenderness of divine love gains on us continually:—the power *for* us is also power *over* us.

Divine grace is full and assured: "every one of them appeareth before God in Zion." There is no uncertainty or ambiguity about this.

5. The last section shows us now, as it appears, a soul embarking on this pilgrimage. His face is set toward the house of God, and he starts with a prayer to Him on whom he realizes his dependence. He addresses Him moreover not only as "Jehovah, God of hosts," whom he needs to be a defence about him, but also as "the God of Jacob," recognizing his need of the grace which this term expresses. And now we come to see afresh the ground of his assurance: "Behold," he says, "O God our shield; and look upon the face of Thine Anointed." "The confirmation in ver. 11," observes Delitzsch, "puts the fact that we have before us a psalm belonging to the time of David's persecution by Absalom beyond all doubt. Manifestly, when his king prevails, the poet will at the same time be restored to the sanctuary." Even taken in this way, the typical significance is not difficult to discern. How much more when we realize the application to the latter days: for what anointed beside One can then be thought of? There will be no king in Israel then, and to speak, as some do, of Israel as this is entirely strange to Scripture. On the other hand, that the doctrine of acceptance in Christ should take the form of prayer in the Old Testament, is no real difficulty. Israel looked in hope for what we, more favored, see as already accomplished.

Thus now the psalmist's heart bursts out afresh with desire towards the sanctuary from which he is yet absent. He would rather stand even at the threshold of the house of God, than dwell in the tents—the mere temporary dwellings—of the wicked. "For a sun and a shield is Jehovah Elohim"—not a sun which smites, but which shields: and this is true of the natural sun even, in a

(iv.) the experience of the way.

(v.) the recompense.

For a [p]sun and shield is Jehovah Elohim:
Jehovah giveth [q]grace and [r]glory;
[s]no good will he withhold from those that walk [t]uprightly.
Jehovah of hosts:
[u]happy is the man that trusteth in thee!

p *cf.* Is.60.19. *cf.* Mal.4.2.
q *cf.* 2Cor.12. 9.
r Ps. 73. 24.
s Ps. 34.9,10. Ps. 37. 3.
t Ps. 33. 1.
u Ps. 2. 12.

Ps. lxxxv.

[z]PSALM LXXXV.

"Things that accompany salvation."

To the chief musician: a psalm of the sons of [v]Korah.

v Ps.84,title.

1(1-3): Grace.
(i.) Jehovah its source.
(ii.) sin put away.
(iii.) the inner meaning.

JEHOVAH, thou hast shown [w]favor to thy land:
thou hast [x]brought back the captivity of Jacob.
Thou hast put away the iniquity of thy people:
thou hast [y]covered all their sin. Selah.
Thou hast taken away all thy wrath:
thou hast turned from the heat of thine anger.

w *cf.* Ps.102. 13.
x Ps. 126. Jer. 31. 23.
y *cf.* Is. 40.1, 2.

way we feebly realize. Cholera will take the sunless side of a street, and the other will escape it. But the image (only found here in Scripture) necessarily reminds us of Him in whom God has manifested Himself—in whom the glory of the Light has clothed a body, to become for us the Luminary of the day. Who can resist here the thought that Christ is again thus designedly brought before us? if not in that of the writer, yet in the thought of the Spirit, as moved of Whom he writes.

Naturally it follows that "Jehovah giveth grace and glory": only as grace could He give glory; and glory is the crown, not of our ways, but of His ways with us. Yet it is to the upright in heart and walk; for grace makes such: "*no* good will He withhold from those that walk uprightly." Well may the conclusion be: "Jehovah of hosts; happy is the man that trusteth in Thee."

Psalm LXXXV.

We now find in the other psalm of this couplet the attributes of God united in the salvation of His people. Personally, Christ is not seen in it, but we know well that it is only through the work of Christ that this can be. It is, as we see everywhere, by putting the psalms together that the full character of each becomes apparent. The heading of the psalm may well be, in the words of the epistle to the Hebrews, "things which accompany salvation." The glory of God displayed in it is indeed the great, the unspeakable blessing which it brings, and which is its practical power in the reconciliation of the soul to God.

1. The connection of the first section with that which follows it has been a difficulty to many. How can the psalmist say, "Thou hast taken away all Thy wrath," and then almost immediately cry out, "cause Thy wrath toward us to cease"? One might escape this by saying in the first case "hadst," instead of "hast." But I apprehend that this is not the real way of understanding it. Nor is it to be explained by what is not uncommon in the psalms,—the first three verses giving the full blessing, from which the psalmist returns to the sorrow which preceded it. I believe the true explanation is that he is pleading rather that the blessing which has in fact come, may be abiding,—in view of the former seasons of refreshment and deliverance which had again and again passed away in returning gloom and distress,—returning displeasure for repeated departure from God. Now, he asks, let this go on no more: let the anger vanish forever, and the goodness shown remain at last. And this is a prayer which is answered, for the blessed time of which the angel spake to Daniel is now at hand, "to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness" (Dan. ix. 24). It

2 (4-6): Deprecation of further anger. (i.) let peace be perpetual. (ii.) and no further anger. (iii.) revive us for sanctification.

3 (7-9): Predicted accomplishment. (i.) Jehovah's grace. (ii.) assurance of what God will speak. (iii.) the glory returning.

[z] Turn us, O God of our salvation:
and cause thy wrath toward us to cease.
Wilt thou be angry with us for [a] ever?
wilt thou protract thine anger generation after generation?
Wilt thou not turn and [b] revive us,
that thy people may be glad in thee?

Show us thy [c] loving-kindness, Jehovah:
yea, thy salvation thou shalt grant to us.
I will [d] hear what the Mighty One, Jehovah, will speak:
for he will speak peace to his people,
and to his godly ones, that they [e] turn not to folly again.
Surely his salvation is [f] nigh them that fear him,
that [g] glory may dwell in our land.

z Ps. 80. 3, 7, 19.
a Ps. 74. 1.
b Ps. 80. 18. Hab. 3. 2.
c *cf.* Is. 14.1.
d *cf.* Ps.50.7. Is. 57. 19.
e *cf.* Ps. 78. 11, 40.
f Is.46.12,13. Is. 51. 5. Is. 56. 1.
g *cf.* Is. 4. 5. *cf.* Ezek.43. 1-7. *cf.* Is.60.19-21.

is for *Israel*, as in this prophecy, that these blessings are now to be accomplished.

Jehovah is praised, then, for showing favor to the land, and bringing back the captivity of Jacob. The name used (Jacob) may indeed remind us of the grace of God, but it may speak no less of the untrustworthiness of the people. But now their iniquity is put all away, their sin all covered. The blessing is in the changed relation of Jehovah Himself, whose anger is passed away; a blessing indeed, for in His favor is life—eternal life.

2. Upon this the psalmist appeals to Him whom he owns as the God of their salvation, and beseeches that they may be truly returned to Him, so that His wrath may cease and rise no more. Shall there be, he asks, the perpetual recurrence (so I read it), generation after generation, of the judgment that sleeps but to come forth with renewed energy again? Wilt Thou not turn and revive us, so that Thy people shall by their joy in Thee be kept from straying—from the sin that provokes Thine anger thus?

3. Then he encourages himself with the assurance of mercy and blessing that are indeed come to abide. He prays that the loving-kindness of the Unchangeable One may be shown them, and immediately comforts himself with the conviction that it is indeed salvation that He will grant to them. He waits for what the God of power, the Eternal, shall speak, anticipating that it shall be peace to His people,—to those brought to respond to His grace,—and which will prevent them from turning to folly any more. He realizes that salvation is nigh, with that which it means when fully wrought for Israel, the glory of God returned to its ancient home, and now to abide there. This is essentially also what redemption means for all the subjects of it—God no longer at a distance, but come nigh. Nought but sin could put practical distance from Him who "is not far from every one of us."

4. The fourth section, as such, marks what follows as the experience which makes good—or is to make good—all that heart can desire or think in the way of blessing. Here we find, therefore, first of all, that concord of the divine attributes displayed, which is the assurance of stability for that with which it is connected. Loving-kindness is first and ruling, one may say, and yet without setting aside,—rather, maintaining with full emphasis the demands of truth. Righteousness is absolute, and yet in full and loving consent with peace towards man: they kiss each other. There was that, evidently, which had hindered, and kept them apart; but it is removed, and that which was ever in God's heart toward men is free to show itself. We cannot but realize in this the work of the cross, though divine government has acted also in the judgment of the rebellious and impenitent. Phinehas has again, as it were, done his zealous work,

¶ (10–13): The experience.
(i.) the divine concord.
(ii.) earth and heaven responsive in salvation.
(iii.) the fruit of the land.
(iv.) the ways that follow.

Loving-kindness and truth are [h]met together:
[i]righteousness and peace have kissed each other.
[j]Truth springeth out of the earth,
and righteousness looketh down from [k]heaven.
Yea, Jehovah giveth that which is [l]good:
and our land shall give its [m]increase.
Righteousness shall go before him,
and shall set [us] in the way of his [n]steps.

h *cf.* Rom. 3. 24. *cf.* 1 Jno. 1. 5 with 1 Jno. 4. 8, 9.
i Ps. 72. 3. Is. 32. 17. Is. 52. 7, 8. *cf.* Heb. 7. 2.
j *cf.* Is. 45. 8.
k *cf.* Hos. 2. 21–23.
l Ps. 84. 11.
m Ps. 67. 6.
n Is. 11. 16; Is. 40. 3; Is. 49. 10, 11.

and in this way made atonement to offended holiness (Num. xxv. 11–13, *notes*). Here then is the foundation laid of permanent blessing. Truth is seen in the fulfilment of glorious promise, as well as in the execution of necessary judgment. Righteousness is not only consistent with, but insures the blessing of those who as sinners take refuge in the sacrifice for sin.

Thus salvation is actually found by them: for heaven and earth, God and man, are now in real and stable relationship and correspondence. Truth springs out of the earth,—man owning God, and owning, too, his own need and sin; while righteousness—for him still otherwise impossible—looks down from heaven: for Christ is the only righteousness for man at any time. Thus Israel is truly converted and saved. She is with God according to the indefectible terms of the new covenant; and all is indeed divinely secure.

Fruitfulness follows as to the land. The curse is removed from it: "Jehovah giveth that which is good; and our land shall give its increase." And ways of righteousness are found among His people, respondent to the perfect rule of Him who now reigns over them in righteousness.

Sec. 2.

In the second section it is that Christ is seen in His servant-character, the Head in this respect and Lord of many servants taught and inspired of Him to glorify God in the path of obedience. That the saved are, as that, servants, shows, of course, the holiness of salvation; while the Son of God in service is above all that which displays and glorifies God. He is seen in it in unswerving righteousness and glorious holiness, while His love so learned bows and subdues the most stubborn will to Him. Thus it is no difficulty here that we have the Servant and the servants, though in the details of its working out there may be difficulty, which we shall have to consider in its place. The connection of the two psalms now before us with the third book as a whole, and with the subdivision in which we find them is simple enough.

The two psalms of the section are (as so commonly where there are just two) in contrast with one another, and in ways which can only be fitly seen as we take them up for separate consideration; but in the first it is clear that we have the *Lord* owned—*Adonai*, which is the title of God as such; in the second, we find the *Servant* owned. In both we have the Servant and the servants; identified in some sense, in others distinguished, as naturally must be the case. Both these, the identification and the distinction, are necessary to bring out His glory who is ever before us in the word of God.

Psalm LXXXVI.

The eighty-sixth psalm has, however, peculiar difficulties which we must now consider. As already said, its theme may be said to be *Adonai*, the Lord. The servant's path is, of course, the owning of God as such; and Adonai is here found *seven times*, which of course must have its significance where, as in Scripture, all is significant. The only other psalm in which we find it as often—and indeed, the very same number of times, is the sixty-eighth; but there "God" is found so often (thirty times), and other names of God, as Almighty, Jah, Jehovah, as quite to prevent its having there the same proportionate value. Here

SECTION 2. (Ps. lxxxvi., lxxxvii.)

The Servant and the servants.

Ps. lxxxvi.

[1]PSALM LXXXVI.

Adonai.

A prayer of [o]David.

1 (1, 2): The plea (i.) with Jehovah (ii.) of the dependent servant.

[p]BOW down, Jehovah, thine ear,—answer me!
for I am [q]poor and needy.
[r]Preserve my soul, for I am [s]godly:
save thy [t]servant, O thou, my God!
him who [u]trusteth thee.

o cf. Ps. 72. 20.
p Ps. 31. 2. Ps. 71. 2.
q cf. Ps. 40. 17 with Ps. 72. 4.
r cf. Ps. 16. 1 with Ps. 97. 10.
s cf. Ps. 16. 10 with Ps. 4. 3.
t cf. Is. 42. 1-3 with Is. 42. 17-20. Is. 65. 8-15
u cf. Ps. 16. 1 with Is. 26. 1-4.

Jehovah is found four times, and God only four; a very small number compared with the frequency of these in general.

Adonai is then the theme of the speaker: the servant proclaims his Lord. But who, then, is this servant? A glance at the title might seem to give us the answer; indeed, must, one would say, have some significance in this respect. It is "a prayer of David," imbedded between Korahite psalms, and the only psalm ascribed to him in the third book. We immediately, necessarily, think of David's more than royal Antitype, and expect to find Christ's voice throughout the psalm.

But here there is at once great and apparently insuperable difficulty. The eleventh verse, as it stands in the Hebrew, "unite my heart to fear Thy Name," could never have been the prayer of our Lord, whatever His humiliation. The Septuagint, Syriac and Vulgate indeed, by the help of another punctuation, substitute for this, "my heart shall rejoice": but this is rejected in general, and would only partially relieve the difficulty. The fifth verse bases the confidence of the suppliant towards God on His being "good and ready to forgive," for which again the Septuagint uses the vaguer term "gentle," but the verb in Hebrew is always—as far as Scripture is concerned—"to forgive, remit." The fifteenth verse again seems to take similar ground.

Thus it would seem that only indirectly could this be the "prayer of (the antitypical) David"—His as being the fruit of His work in those whom He leads in the path in which He Himself has alone been perfect. But in this way the title may be a necessary supplementary note of interpretation as to the psalm, just as we have seen "on the Gittith" to be to the three psalms to which it is prefixed (Ps. viii., lxxxi., lxxxiv.). Only in this way also does the connection with the next psalm become fully clear, as we shall see.*

1. In the opening section, the psalmist takes his place with Jehovah as poor and needy, but godly, not unmindful of his creature-relation to Him in whom he believes and whom he serves. This is his plea for help and preservation. The want of originality in the psalm has been noticed by many. "Familiar expressions and phrases from the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets," says Moll, "loosely connected [?], are found throughout." "But," adds Delitzsch, "although for the most part flowing on only in the language of prayer borrowed from earlier periods, this psalm is not without unmistakable significance and beauty."

If, however, it be the expression of a faith which, wherever it is found, brings the soul into this relation to God as the obedient servant of His will, how striking is it that it should be thus a harmony of many voices and of different periods in one connected whole! Its very want of originality is in this way itself in remarkable accordance with what it is intended to convey to us. And the argu-

* There is also a beautiful connection with the latter half of Isaiah, where from chap. xl.–xlviii. Israel is seen as the servant, and unfaithful; then from xlix. to lx. Christ is the perfect Servant, and standing under the load of the sins of others; and finally, from lxi.-lxvi., the remnant are now seen and accepted as the servants.

2 (3-7): Help in the way.
(i) constant grace for constant need.
(ii.) joy for service.
(iii.) God his refuge.
(iv.) the need experienced.
(v.) but God with him.

Be gracious unto me, O Lord!
for I call unto thee, [v]all the day.
Make [w]glad the soul of thy servant:
for [x]unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.
For thou, Lord, art [y]good and ready to forgive,
and full of loving-kindness to all that [z]call upon thee.
Give ear unto my [a]prayer, Jehovah:
and attend unto the voice of my supplications.
In the day of my [b]distress I will call upon thee:
for thou wilt answer me.

3 (8, 9): The fruit in worship.
(i.) the only God.
(ii.) increase.

There is [c]none among the gods like thee, Lord:
and there is nothing like thy [d]works.
All the [e]nations whom thou hast made shall come
and worship before thee, Lord,
and [f]glorify thy Name.

v Ps. 25. 5.
w Ps. 4. 6, 7.
x Ps. 25. 1.
y Ps. 145. 9. Mi. 7. 18.
z Ps. 145. 18.
a Ps. 88. 2.
b Ps. 50. 15. Ps. 77. 2.
c Ex. 15. 11. Ps. 89. 6. Is.40.18-26.
d Deu. 3. 24. *cf.* Job, chps. 38,39.
e Ps. 72. 10, 11. Zech. 14.16-19.
f *cf.* Is.60.12, 13.

ment that it cannot be really a psalm of David, because "the writer cannot be compared for poetic capability with David," turns the other way when we think of the spiritual meaning of the harmonizing of such scattered utterances of the people of God by One—the true David—who Himself has trodden in His perfection ("Beginner and Finisher of faith") the whole of this path! How the apparent blemishes of Scripture, when we see the real meaning of them, become themselves witnesses to its absolute inspiration!

2. In the second section we find the help needed—the education of faith, we may perhaps say, by continual exercise. When God brought His people out of Egypt and into training for the land, He brought them into the wilderness, and made them thus for everything dependent upon Himself: and this is still His way; for these things are our types. So now with the psalmist: grace is needed in answer to calls that go up to Him all the day. And joy in Him one serves is that which alone can give strength for all the daily wear and tear of contact with a world such as this. "Rejoice in the Lord alway" is the apostle's rule and admonition: and we with our eyes lifted up to Him whom we have learned to call that, have reason indeed for this that the psalmist could not know. The path we are upon is the same path *He* traveled to the throne; and upon the Throne He is who knows all the need of the way we travel.

Apart from this, what a comfort is it to have a path known to be God's path for us, a path we travel in obedience simply, so that consequences are all His, and He may be trusted for them. The roughest path, if known to be His, can never lack a song.

But we are frail indeed, who walk in it. How blessed, then, to have our refuge in One who is "good and ready to forgive, and full of loving-kindness to all that call upon" Him! With this need may be faced, and (if we have faith for it) gloried in, that means constant proving of the living God; and when with trial the assurance increases: "I will call upon Thee: for Thou wilt answer me."

3. Thus the song arises: the need and its answer both make God alone glorious, and destroy all other trusts, vain as the senseless gods of the heathen. "There is none among the gods like Thee, Lord: and there is nothing like Thy works." Thus he foresees that of necessity the world must be brought to realize this: "All nations whom Thou hast made shall come and worship before Thee, Lord, and glorify Thy Name." This is truest prophecy, what the knowledge of God in this practical way ensures. The time has been long protracted indeed; and even yet the end (so long after the prophet's time) may seem as far off as ever; and yet it shall, it must be, true: the Lord Himself hasten it, as He will.

4. Now we have the path itself with its trials and experiences, in which these principles are practically realized. First of all, the sufficiency for it, which is

4 (10-14): The path.
(i)) the sufficiency for it.
(ii.) utter dependence.

For [g] great art thou, and doing [h] wondrous things:
thou art God [i] alone.
[j] Teach me thy way, Jehovah:
I will walk in thy truth;
[k] unite my heart to fear thy Name.

g Ps. 48. 1. Ps. 135. 5.
h Ps. 136. 4.
i Deu. 32.39. Is. 45. 5, 18, 22.
j Ps. 25. 4. Ps. 27. 11.
k *cf.* Mt. 6. 22; *cf.* Phil. 3. 13, 14; *cf.* Jas. 1. 8 with Judg. 5. 15, 16; *ctr.* Ps. 16. 5.

in God alone: this is but the application of what has been already said; but it is the necessary foundation on which alone a life with God can be based. And our utter dependence upon Him is expressed in the next verse, in which with the full purpose of heart to walk in His truth the psalmist confesses his need, not only of instruction as to the way, the one way which is Jehovah's, but also of his own deliverance from the infirmity which nevertheless yields so to distraction: "*unite* my heart," he says, "to fear Thy Name." This is indeed what is everywhere the great lack among the people of God. How much of our lives is, not spent in positive evil, but frittered away and lost in countless petty diversions which spoil effectually the positiveness of their testimony for God! How few can say with the apostle, "This *one* thing I do!" We are on the road—not, at least, intentionally off it—but we stop to chase butterflies among the flowers, and make no serious progress. How Satan must wonder when he sees us turn away from the "kingdoms of the world and the glory of them" when realized as his temptation, and yet yield ourselves with scarce a thought to endless trifles, lighter than the thistle-down which the child spends all his strength for, and we laugh at him. Would we examine our lives carefully in such an interest as this, how should we realize the multitude of needless anxieties, of self-imagined duties, of permitted relaxations, of "innocent" trifles, which incessantly divert us from that in which alone there is profit! How few, perhaps, would care to face such an examination of the day by day unwritten history of their lives!

"We must not be legal": with such an excuse, how we pass over the "little things" which come in everywhere unchallenged by reason of their littleness. "We must not make religion too severe": and so we take off our armor on the battle-field. "We must not have a morbid conscience": and so we forget to *exercise* ourselves, that we may have one void of offence toward God and man. Concentration of purpose is what most of all the devil dreads for us as Christians, and the air is full of whispered plausibilities and lullabies to deprive us of this. Thus Christ Himself as "all" for us is looked at as somewhat not to be too seriously taken; the glorious sunshine is to be helped to be brighter by men's taper-lights; or carefully shaded from eyes too infirm to enjoy it in its brightness or too continuously.

How perfect a lesson there is for us here in the Lord's words as to the vine-branch and abiding in Him (Jno. xv.)! The branch abides in the vine without intermission: a moment's intermission would be fatal to it. And "as the branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine, no more can ye," says He, "except ye abide in Me."

But then for *what* are we to abide in Him? The whole purpose of the vine is *fruit;* and this is what rules in the ways of the husbandman with it. He prunes unsparingly, that he may have fruit: one might think, to look at him, that he was making but a wreck of the whole plant. What harm in all this wood and leaf that he is paring away? In itself none; and yet in relation to its fruit-bearing, very much. Not the parasites that destroy it from without can do it much more harm than just these fruitless stems and this exuberant foliage. The precious sap is drawn off by them by which the fruit is to be filled out and perfected; and, if they are spared, not simply will there be less fruit, but (worse than all) *the whole character of that which is produced is deteriorated.* And so with the toleration of much that is merely evil in its power to draw off and scatter the energies which should be yielding fruit for Him and are not. It is the "one thing I do" that as a principle characterizes the whole man, and marks him out as Christ's, glorifies Christ in him. It means seriously "Christ is all." It

(iii.) fruit in praise.
I will [l]praise thee, O Lord my God, with my whole heart,
and I will [m]glorify thy Name for ever.

(iv.) experience.
For thy [n]loving-kindness is great toward me
and thou hast [o]delivered my soul from the nether Sheol.

(v.) appeal to divine government.
O God, the [p]insolent are risen against me,
and the assembly of the violent [q]seek after my soul,
and have not [r]set thee before them.

5 (15–17): With God.
(i.) a sufficient resource.
But thou, Lord, art the Mighty One, merciful and gracious,
[s]slow to anger, and abundant in loving-kindness and truth.

l Ps. 111.1.
m Ps. 34. 3.
n Ps. 103. 4.
o *cf.* Ps. 16. 10 with Is. 38. 17.
p Ps. 123. 3, 4.
q Ps. 54. 3.
r Ps. 36. 1–4. *ctr.* Ps. 16. 8.
s Ps. 103. 8, 9.

proclaims Him the sunshine of life, not shadow; and sunshine is what the fruit needs. It says that for progress every moment of life is valuable, saves the life from dilettanteism and superficiality, makes Christ Lord, not casual adviser: no wonder that in the servant's psalm we should find, as nowhere else in them, this prayer, "Unite my heart to fear Thy Name."

And no wonder that this spirit declares itself directly as the spirit of praise which indeed it is: praise from the whole life. "I will praise Thee, O Lord my God, with my whole heart; and I will glorify Thy Name for ever." Who doubts that the life of that man of one idea, Paul, was a sunny life? Who can afford to pity him because of its vicissitudes? With his feet fast in the stocks in the inner prison, he will be singing, just at midnight, his praises to God. That life of his began under the glory of an opened heaven, with a vision which shut out all other brightness, and became to him in place of all other. Such a life we perhaps may find in all its fulness nowhere else among mere men: but covet it, we may, and reach out after it, and see how much God will deny us of it; whether, rather, we do not ourselves limit and cut ourselves off from it, by the poorest, saddest, most insane and disastrous form of self-denial that can be found.

"With my whole heart," and "for ever"! These are two things very closely connected: just as the seed that roots itself deeply in the earth becomes the enduring plant. Let the whole soul be thus taken up for God, vantage-ground is not given to the thorns and weeds to spring up and choke the early promise.

The voice of experience is heard in the next verse: "For Thy loving-kindness is great towards me; and Thou hast delivered my soul from the nether Sheol." Thus with confidence can he appeal now to God when the insolent are risen up against him and the assembly of the violent seek after his soul. "They have not," he says, "set Thee before them:" thus they are meet for Divine judgment.

5. The closing section shows the grounds of the soul's confidence in God as present with him, which are, first of all, in what God Himself is, and then in the relation subsisting with Him. "Thou, Lord, art the Mighty One, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in loving-kindness and truth." This is God's own testimony to Himself (Ex. xxxiv. 6), upon the giving of the law the second time; but it is the testimony to the grace which came in to modify the law as far as practicable, while the legal element, which could not after all be modified by it so as to be effectual for man's salvation, is omitted. This shows how faith could penetrate the disguise in which love veiled itself, and find it, even while under the shadows of that dispensation. Here then is its resource and rest.

But there is also relationship, though it be not yet the full joyous relationship into which the gospel brings. It is that rather which the whole psalm contemplates: "give Thy strength unto Thy servant, and save"—not Thy son, but—"the son of Thy *handmaid*." This was what the law was, typically, the Hagar,

(ii.) dependent relationship.
(iii.) manifest Thyself.

[t]Turn to me and be gracious unto me:
give thy [u]strength unto thy servant,
and save the [v]son of thy handmaid.
Appoint me a [w]token for good,
that those who hate me may see it and be [z]ashamed:
because thou, Jehovah, hast [y]helped me and comforted me.

[t] Ps. 25. 16.
[u] Ps. 71. 16, 18.
[v] *cf.* Ps. 116. 16. *cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 5.
[w] *cf.* 2 Ki. 20. 8–11.
[x] Ps. 70. 2.
[y] Ps. 54. 4.

Ps. lxxxvii.

[2]PSALM LXXXVII.

His testimony to His servants.

A psalm-song of the sons of [z]Korah.

1 (1–3): Zion, (i.) the foundation. (ii.) the object of Jehovah's love.

HIS [a]foundation is in the holy mountains:
Jehovah [b]loveth the gates of Zion
more than [c]all the dwellings of Jacob.

[z] Ps. 84, etc., titles.
[a] Ps. 48. 1, 2, 12, 13. Ps. 125. 1, 2. Is. 26. 1. *cf.* Is. 28. 16.
[b] Ps. 78. 67–69.
[c] Ps. 122.

who though but the nurse and instructress of the children of God, taught them to call her mother. But faith, that taught the Syrophenician woman to make her argument out of the very term of reproach, and to plead for the crumbs which even the "dogs" might be permitted, teaches the speaker here to urge the very servant position which was his as a child of the dispensation, as it were, —by God's appointment, not his own. He yet, in the confession of helplessness could fall back upon strength not his own, and find it: not of course to make good a self-righteous claim, but the very opposite: "Turn to me and be gracious unto me: give Thy strength unto Thy servant, and save the son of Thy handmaid." All is perfect lowliness and self-distrust.

But the Lord must appear for him, and appoint him a token for good. It is a necessary result of this position of servant merely, which has in it no absolute assurance of abiding favor (as the servant's has none, Jno. viii. 35), that one in it should be more dependent upon manifest interventions and assurances of an outward character. Our "token for good" is once for all the sign of the cross, and by this we recognize the divine favor towards us, although the living God is of course, as fully to be counted on as ever. The enemies can only recognize the interventions. Jehovah's "help and comfort" have been provided for us in a manner which makes them as unchangeably to be relied on, as that immutable nature of which it is the expression.

Psalm LXXXVII.

The eighty-seventh psalm, short as it is, is by its very conciseness open to different interpretations, and is essentially a "deep saying"—a problem to be resolved by the spiritual mind alone. Almost any translation of it must have more or less of the character of interpretation: as, for instance, if we only translate in verses 4 and 6, "that [*man*]," man is not in the original, and most, perhaps, would rather understand for it, "nation." The result would be to make the psalm a celebration of the conversion of the world to God: each people named being assigned to Zion as its spiritual birth-place. Similarly the ascription of the seventh verse would be to Zion. Cheyne says: "'Born there' is of course to be explained by the familiar Jewish saying that a proselyte is like a new-born." In this way of considering it, there would be a certain connection with the previous psalm in its ninth verse: "all nations whom Thou hast made shall come and worship before Thee." But there are two objections to this: the first, that the connection here seems rather incidental than essential; the second, that (according to the prophecies of the period referred to) there is no promise of Babylon and Philistia being converted to God; but the reverse, as we may see directly. We shall have, however, to take up the psalm, as is evident, with more than ordinary care.

The seven verses have an unusual division into 3. 3. 1: which seems how-

(ill.) His dwelling-place.

2 (4-6): The testimony.

(i.) to single individuals.

[d] Glorious things are spoken of thee,
O [e] city of God. Selah.

I will make mention of [f] Rahab and [g] Babel to those that know me;
behold [h] Philistia and [i] Tyre, with [j] Cush:
[k] this [man] was born there.

[d] *cf.* Is. 2. 1-5. [e] *cf.* Is. 51. 17-23. *cf.* Is. 52. 1-10. *cf.* Is. 60. [e] Is. 60. 14. *cf.* Rev. chps. 21, 22. [f] Ps. 89. 10. Is. 51. 9, 10.

[g] Ps. 137. [h] Ps. 108. 9. [i] Ps. 83. 7. [j] *cf.* Is. 18. 1. [k] *cf.* Ex. 1. 8; *cf.* 2 Ki. 24. 1; *cf.* 1Sa. 17. 4; *cf.* Ezek. 28. 1-19; *cf.* Ezek. 32. 17-32.

ever to be that of the very first seven in Scripture,—the creative days (Gen. i.–ii. 3).

1. The first three verses plainly speak of Zion as the object of Jehovah's love, Zion itself means "fixed:" and that is what stands out clearly as to the time contemplated. Like Jerusalem which is above, it is the "city which has foundations"; and these are in the holy mountains, images of the fixed, enduring holiness of God Himself. The foundations of the heavenly city are like the jeweled breast-plate of the high-priest, the Urim and Thummim, the "lights and perfections" of Him who is Perfect Light. The stability of the city depends upon there being in it the display in glory of all that God is. It exists because He exists. It abides because He abides. So, on its lower level, with the city below. It is the place of His rest; and rest He never can, except as the requirements of His nature are met and satisfied: there is nothing to produce a note of discord. On the holy mountains is His foundation.

There then His heart is free; and, being so, is poured forth in love: "Jehovah loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob." His love is active; and these gates are the symbol of activity,—the place of ingress and egress,—the place where wisdom cries and justice is transacted, and which stands for all its busy life,—the city itself, as it were. Zion the royal city is in closest connection with those "dwellings of Jacob" which also—every one of them—Jehovah loves, and therefore loves most of all what is their supremest expression. The "dwellings of *Jacob*" imply, as we know, not human righteousness but divine grace; and Zion is *royalty* in grace, as the seventy-eighth psalm has pointed out to us (68-70). "Glorious things" may indeed well "be spoken" therefore of the "city of God."

2. The second section now speaks of a certain testimony which God is giving: "I will make mention of Rahab (pride) and Babel (confusion) to them that know Me: behold Philistia and Tyre, with Cush: this [man] was born there." Here comes, however, the question of interpretation before pointed out. Moll with others would translate, "*as* those that know Me," which it is allowed it may be rendered; and Delitzsch similarly remarks that the meaning is "for what purpose, or as what these kingdoms, hitherto hostile towards God and His people, shall be declared: Jehovah completes what He Himself has brought about, inasmuch as He publicly and solemnly declares them to be those who know Him, *i. e.* those who experimentally know Him as their God. Accordingly it is clear that 'This one was born there' is also meant to refer to the conversion of the other three nations to whom the finger of God points. . . . 'This one' does not refer to the individuals, nor to the sum-total of these nations, but to nation after nation, by fixing the eye upon each one separately. And '*there*' refers to Zion . . . nations which are born in Zion. The poet does not combine with this the idea of being born again in the depth of its New Testament meaning: he means, however, that the nations will attain a right of citizenship in Zion as in their second mother-city, that they will therefore at any rate experience a spiritual change which, regarded from the New Testament point of view, is the new birth out of water and the Spirit."

This is happily not a question of the language used; and therefore all are capable of deciding it by plain Scripture. The first of these nations, Rahab, is Egypt; and of Egypt God has indeed prophesied blessing as well as of Assyria.

(ii.) Zion's many.

(iii.) the reality with Jehovah.

And of Zion it may be said, [l]'This man and that was born in her,
and the Highest himself [m]establisheth her.
Jehovah counteth, when he [n]writeth down the peoples,—
[o]this [man] was born there. Selah.

[l] *cf.* Is.60.21, 22. *cf.* Is. 54. 1.
[m] ver. 1.
[n] *cf.* Mal. 4. 16–18. *cf.* Ezek.13. 9.
[o] *cf.* Is.53.1–3 with Is. 63. 1-6; *cf.* Ps. 45.1-8.

These will be, in days to come, conterminous with Israel's territory; and "in that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: whom Jehovah of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel Mine inheritance" (Isa. xix. 23–25).

Thus Scripture predicts with perfect plainness the blessing of Egypt; and had it been Assyria that we found connected with her, there could have been no question raised as to the suitableness of the interpretation given by the writers mentioned, as far as these two were concerned. But where we might have expected Assyria, we find Babel, and a very different future is assigned to Babel: "For I will rise up against them, saith Jehovah of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name and remnant and son and nephew, saith Jehovah. I will also make it a possession for the bittern and pools of water, and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith Jehovah of hosts" (Isa. xiv. 22, 23). The definiteness of the prediction in the one case shows that this in the psalm is not one.

Philistia is also threatened to be destroyed without inhabitant (Zeph. ii. 5; Amos i. 8), her land to be possessed by Judah. This is another witness that the psalmist does not prophesy the conversion of these nations to God. This interpretation being purely conjectural and opposed to other scriptures, cannot be maintained; while to apply it merely to *individuals* out of these nations in the same way would be to deprive it of any particular importance, and from another side destroy it as a prophecy.

But if not a prophecy, then it can only be a contrast that is drawn here, between the countries named and their great men, and Zion and hers in the next verse; and this is perfectly natural, after dwelling upon the glory of Zion itself. The world boasts its heroes, and has ever boasted: the fame of the men of Egypt and Babylon is in our ears to-day—of kings, conquerors, builders, who speak to us in perished languages, from their uncovered monuments. Really, it would seem as if God were permitting all these nations to tell their own story of the men born in them, and that we may contrast it with the voices of the men of Zion, men of a feeble, despised, and scattered people, which yet strangely move us as no others do. On the one hand, the dead past speaks to us from its unsealed sepulchre, a memorial of doom which its own words justify and we cannot regret: there is in it no title to resurrection. On the other, there are voices that never die,—living and life-giving,—that proclaim not their own praise, but ascribe greatness unto God, and live eternally by their own hold of the Eternal. On the one hand, the voice is single—in each generation but a single voice; some king for whom his kingdom seems alone to have existed, and who tells us how many he has slaughtered, that he might have room to dwell in. On the other, the voice of many in chorus, the king of Israel with the gatherer of sycamore fruit, each having his part in a strain which, though it may be often sad, is never discordant, and which ends in triumphant harmony. Aye, "of Zion it may be said that *this man and that* was born in her, and the Highest Himself establisheth her." How else, indeed, can the mystery of this be explained? And it shall be fully seen in the day to which the psalm looks on.

But this is not all; nay, all would be left out, if this were to be taken as all. Jehovah's voice has not been heard directly yet; and plainly we shall never get a perfect knowledge of things, except He guide us. He too is the One who

3 (7): The spring of worship.

And the [p]singers as well as the players on instruments [shall say],
All my [q]springs are in thee.

[p] *cf.* Is.51.11.
[q] *cf.* Jer.2.13 with Jno. 7. 37-39.

"writeth down the peoples."—takes account of all with no mere local or national partiality, but in absolute righteousness and truth. Strange then it may seem that now, when we have His reckoning of things, even Zion's count of her great men is gone. In all history there seems now but One Name. One Person takes the place of every other. "Jehovah counteth, when *He* writeth down the peoples, that THIS Man was born there."

3. An enigma, is it? Couched in abrupt, enigmatical language, indeed: but as a secret which He expects that we should fathom. And suddenly there bursts out as from a multitude, in songs and with instruments to swell the melody, another voice as enigmatical, and yet with the same appeal to our intelligence,—as if there were no possibility of going wrong in the interpretation of it; a voice which is one and individual, and yet the voice of all; a response echoing Jehovah's claim for the One Man of His approval: "All my springs are in Thee."

The Christian heart can translate this, and the Christian only. It is not that the Lord whom they have served does not appreciate the service of His people. It is not that their names can be forgotten with Him. But it is the Old Testament version of what has come out in full reality in the gospel of our salvation,—the truth that, *for* salvation, the cross of Christ had to be our all: death and judgment had to do their awful work upon our Substitute and Saviour; and thus God pronounced upon man, thus He had to put him away from His sight, that He might show us mercy. Those who believe are now therefore by the cross "dead with Christ" and "buried with Christ," so as to be accepted in Another raised from the dead, His work accomplished.

How plain, therefore, that there is but One Man, whom God sees, the perfect Servant of His perfect will; and that Zion's great men can only come in before God thus. How well may they sing, and how surely they know to Whom they sing, "All my springs are in Thee"! The glory of Zion, the dwelling-place of God in Israel, is found in Him.

Thus the two psalms here come into their place with one another. The servants' path in the one finds its recognition from God in the other; and the One perfect Servant is distinguished from, while seen to be the sufficiency and boast, of every other. Thus the work of salvation is seen once more to be for holiness.

Sec. 3.

The third section closes this part, and the whole book, by showing how, in the work of salvation, man is realized for what he is, lost and undone, and help only to be found in Another; accordant truths, in which nevertheless the usual contrast of subjects in these pairs of psalms is seen. The eighty-eighth is an awful picture of almost unrelieved despair. The eighty-ninth is strong and confident in its assurance of God's fulfillment of His covenant with David, even though adverse circumstances seem to plead against it. And through this we can clearly read a better hope. The two together give us essentially the lesson of the dispensations—of all human history: setting aside all creature confidence to set this upon God alone. And in this true sanctification, the "holiness of truth," is attained. Thus we have a fitting end to the third book.

PSALM LXXXVIII.

The title of the eighty-eighth psalm is peculiar: and its two parts have been pleaded as contradictory; Heman the Ezrahite being of the tribe of Judah, and not a Korahite Levite. There was, however, a Levite of the name of Heman, and it is contended that this is the same person, finding his place by intermarriage among the men of Judah. On the other hand, it has been suggested that while really the work of a Judahite, the psalm may have been written "*for* the sons of Korah," as we may read it. Such reasonings show, at least, that it is

SECTION 3. (Ps. lxxxviii., lxxxix.)
Realization: "the holiness of truth."

Ps. lxxxviii.

[1]PSALM LXXXVIII.

The outcome as to man, in righteousness.

A psalm-song of the sons of [r]Korah: to the chief musician; upon Mahalath Leannoth.

[s]Maskil of [t]Heman the Ezrahite.

1 (1-7): In the hands of God.
(i.) a perpetual cry.
(ii.) answer!
(iii.) a full cup.
(iv.) prostration.
(v.) under judgment.

JEHOVAH, God of my [u]salvation,
I have cried by [v]day [and] in the night before thee.
Let my prayer come before thee:
[w]bow down thine ear to my loud cry.
For my [x]soul is filled with evils,
and my life draweth near to [y]Sheol.
I am [z]counted among those that go down to the pit:
I am as a man that hath [a]no strength.
Free among the [b]dead, like the slain that lie in the grave,
whom thou [c]rememberest no more,
and who are [d]cut off from thy hand.

r Ps. 87, etc., titles.
s Ps. 32, etc., titles.
t *cf.* 1 Ki. 4.31 with 1 Chr. 6. 31-38.
u Ps 27. 9. Ps. 79. 9.
v *cf.* Ps. 22. 2. Ps 32. 4.
w Ps. 86. 1.
x Ps. 6. 3. Ps. 44. 25.
y Ps. 107. 18. Is. 38. 10-13.
z Ps. 28. 1. Ps. 143. 7.
a Ps. 38. 8. Ps. 39. 10, 11. *cf.* 2 Cor. 12. 9.
b Ps. 31. 12.
c *cf.* Ps. 49. 14. *cf.* Ps. 90. 5, 6.
d Lam. 3. 54.

unsafe to reject even part of a title in an inspired book, without plainly confirmatory evidence; and that we are free at least to take it as it stands, and inquire as to its possible meaning.

Mahalath Leannoth means "sickness for humiliation": a very suitable and suggestive title, surely. We have need of such humbling, and therefore God permits such suffering as this psalm shows, that there may be truth in the inward parts before Him. Then, it is, with its fellow, a Maskil, or "instruction"; belonging to that series of such psalms to which the thirty-second introduces us. Most necessary truth here for the "wise" in Israel, or anywhere else, who is to be worthy of the name. And Heman was one of the special sages of Israel, compared with Solomon (1 Kings iv. 31), and his name ("faithful"), according to its derivation, may well point out to us both wisdom and faithfulness to agree, in putting their "amen" to the sayings of God.

The Ezrahite, again, is what is "indigenous," or springs up from its native soil; and the experience that follows is indeed home-born, and natural enough to such as we are; nay, what is proper to the whole race outside of paradise; though, thank God, to face it is to find deliverance from it; and this connects once more these closing psalms.

1. But eighteen verses altogether in the one before us; and yet what misery is shut up in them! Not that God is not looked to; for it is to Him that all is poured out. It is when we begin to live that the meaning of death becomes possible to understand. He who cries cries to One in whose hands he knows himself to be, and in no other's. God is the God of his salvation: nowhere else is salvation to be found. He cries aloud for Him to hearken, baring to Him all the misery with which his soul is filled and bowed down even to Sheol; already to be reckoned among those going down to it, prostrate, nerveless, and impotent. Nay, he is like one for whom the business of life is over, discharged from it, "free among the dead," like one cut off from God's remembrance and His help. Not that he will say, this is so, but that so it seems. And God Himself has done this, laid him in the lowest pit, in the awful darkness of His prison-house—in the depths.

Ah, it is all His anger: that is the utter misery from which there is no escape and no relief. Heat of anger and the overwhelming waves that break, wave after wave, upon him: all figures are used, and all figures fail to convey the

(vi.) the lowest pit.
Thou hast laid me in the [e]lowest pit:
in dark places, in the depths.
(vii.) all Thy wrath.
Thy hot [f]anger lieth hard upon me;
and thou hast afflicted [me] with all thy [g]breakers.
Selah.

2 (8-12): Dependence.
(i.) alone.
Thou hast put mine [h]acquaintance far from me,
thou hast made me an [i]abomination to them:
I am [j]shut up, and cannot come forth.
(ii.) in prayer.
Mine [k]eye pineth because of affliction:
Jehovah, I have called upon thee all the day long;
I have [l]stretched out my palms unto thee.
(iii.) Thy praise?
Wilt thou do [m]wonders unto the dead?
shall the shades arise? shall they praise thee?
Selah.
(iv.) the test of experience.
Shall thy [n]loving-kindness be recounted in the grave?
thy [o]faithfulness in destruction?
(v.) exercise.
Shall thy wonders be known in the [p]darkness?
and thy [q]righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

3 (13, 14): No sanctuary found.
(i.) Jehovah his resource.
But I have cried unto thee, Jehovah,
and in the [r]morning shall my prayer be toward thee.*
(ii.) yet forsaken.
Jehovah, [s]why castest thou off my soul?
[why] [t]hidest thou thy face from me?

e ver. 4. cf. Jonah 2. 2.
f Ps. 6. 1.
g Ps. 42. 7. Jonah 2. 3.
h ver. 18. Ps. 31. 11.
i Job 19. 13-19.
j Job 3. 23. Lam. 3. 7.
k Job 17. 7. Ps. 6. 7. Is. 38. 14.
l Ps. 143. 6.
m Ps. 6. 5. Ps. 30. 9. Is. 38. 18.
n Ps. 115.17. cf. Ps. 116.1-5. cf. Ps. 40.1-3.
o Ps. 89. 1,2, 5, 8.
p Job 10. 21, 22.
q cf. Ps.71.15-18.
r Ps. 5. 3. cf. Ps. 30. 5.
s Ps. 43. 2. cf. Ps. 22. 1.
t Ps. 44. 24. Job 13. 24.

* *Literally*, "come to meet thee."

dread reality, when it is God whose wrath is upon us. For "if God be for us, who can be against us?" and then conversely, if He be against us, where can be found help or hope?

2. But he turns to the Hand that afflicts him,—the Hand that has shut him up in isolation from all others, as a leper, an abomination to his acquaintance,—and he pleads his misery to the Heart that still he knows must be behind the Hand: how the eye wastes with its sorrow as it looks and sees not. "Jehovah, I have called upon Thee all the day long; I have stretched out my palms unto Thee." God dwells among the praises of His people, amid the music of happy hearts tuned in accordance with His own: will He do wonders among the dead? he asks: "shall the shades arise? shall they praise Thee?" It is of course a Jew with his earthly hopes that speaks so: "shall thy loving-kindness be recounted in the grave? Thy faithfulness in destruction?" shall this be the experience of one who looks to Thee? "shall thy wonders be known in the darkness? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?"

It is clear that this is a Jew under the shadows of a law of which death was the penalty, and cut off from the earthly hopes of the nation: for whom death was a perplexity, a "land of darkness," into which the light of life had not yet descended. Job, outside of Israel, utters the same wail; but the earthly promises by their very brightness only made it darker, as a gospel out of reach, a mockery of hopes which it raised and scattered.

3. Here accordingly, he turns to his sanctuary, to find but the veil unrent, and the One Face which has brightness for him hidden. Like Another Sufferer, but from a different stand-point, he asks "why?" but the answer is not here. *He* answers it who goes into the outside darkness to dispel it for others, and who asserts it to be the necessity of divine holiness in regard to sin.

4. The psalm ends without relief. The experience here is but a monotony of distress. From his youth up there has been nothing else—a living death, a distraction of terrors. Wrath gone over him, terrors around him, the undoing of

4 (15-18): The experience of a fallen creature. (i.) from the beginning of life, (ii.) wrath. (iii.) compassing round. (iv.) the creature side.

From my [u]youth have I been afflicted and ready to die:
I suffer thy [v]terrors [and] am distracted.
Thy wrath goeth over me;
thy terrors have brought me to [w]silence.
They have surrounded me like water, all the day;
they have [x]compassed me about together.
[y]Lover and friend hast thou put far from me,—
mine acquaintance into darkness.

[u] *ctr.* Ps. 71. 17.
[v] Job 6. 4. Ps. 77. 3.
[w] Ps. 39. 9-11. Ps. 77. 4.
[x] Jonah 2.5.
[y] ver. 8. Ps. 38. 11.

Ps. lxxxix.

1 (1-37): The covenant of promise.
1 (1-17): Jehovah the Maker.
a (1, 2): inviolability of blessing founded on righteousness. (i.) Jehovah's faithfulness.

[z]PSALM LXXXIX.

Help in Another.

[z]Maskil of [a]Ethan the Ezrahite.

I WILL [b]sing for ever of Jehovah's loving-kindness:
with my mouth will I make known thy [c]faithfulness to all generations.

[z] Ps. 88, etc., titles.
[a] *cf.* 1 Ki. 4. 31. 1 Chr. 2. 6.
[b] *ctr.* Ps. 88. 2, etc.
[c] Ps. 71. 18.

every social bond even. Such is the hopeless misery of man as regards self-help, and apart from a Mediator.

Psalm LXXXIX.

We have now, however, in the last psalm of the book, what is in entire contrast with the previous one, the grace of God as revealed in His covenant with David, upon which the blessing to Israel as a nation rests. These "sure mercies of David" to which the apostle at Antioch refers, quoting Isaiah, (chap. lv. 3) are fulfilled, as he declares, in Christ, and in Christ raised from the dead, His work accomplished, which is what makes them "sure." That Christ is the true David, he, with Peter at Jerusalem, proves from the sixteenth psalm. If David had there said, "Thou wilt not suffer Thy Pious One to see corruption," he had himself yet surely seen corruption. Only Christ, the antitypical David, had not seen it. Here, then, is the "Pious One" of the nineteenth verse. God is speaking in the typical language so constantly used in the Old Testament, and thus the glorious assurances given in His Name are fully justified.

The psalm is another Maskil, and no wonder; and it is the maskil of another Ezrahite, Ethan, whose name means, in full accordance with his subject, "constant, durable." And here too we find what is "proper to the soil" it springs from, the covenant of promise rooting itself in what God is; "durable," because Jehovah endures, the "same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

1. The two main divisions are strongly contrasted in their character. The first enlarges on the covenant of promise itself, and its inviolable nature is strongly insisted on. The second shows us how, nevertheless, the promise might seem to have failed; and this, which is brought forward in solemn appeal to God, goes on to what may be considered the end of the psalm; the closing verse being the usual ascription of praise to Jehovah, with which the third book ends. It is, however, plainly suited as this to be the third division of the psalm, and can scarcely be anything else than this; while its energetic brevity, coming after the long plaint of sorrow, seems even to give it emphasis as the resurrection of faith, which needs no argument, and precedes the answer on God's part: an answer that is fully given in the fourth book.

(i.) The first division has also two subdivisions: the first of which dwells upon Jehovah as being the Maker of the covenant; necessarily (inasmuch as it is a covenant of promise) the only party to it. Thus, if He be faithful, and at the same time all-powerful, all is secure. The argument is so simple and complete, that nothing can be simpler.

(*a*) Accordingly the first section declares the inviolability of the promise, founded on Jehovah's righteousness. "I will sing for ever," says the psalmist,

(ii.) established in loving-kindness.

For I have said, [d]Loving-kindness shall be built up for ever:
in the very [e]heavens shall thy faithfulness be established.

[b] (3-5): Said and sworn.
(i.) a covenant with His Chosen One.

I have made a [f]covenant with my chosen:
I have [g]sworn unto David my servant:

(ii.) its progress.

Thy [h]seed will I establish for ever,
and build up thy [i]throne from generation to generation. Selah.

(iii.) the praise of the heavens.

And the [j]heavens shall praise thy wonders, Jehovah,
and thy faithfulness in the [k]congregation of the holy ones.

[d] 1 Chr. 17. 23, 24.
[e] Ps. 119. 89.
[f] 2 Sa. 23. 5. Is. 55. 3.
[g] *cf.* Gen. 22. 16, 17. *cf.* Ps. 110. 4. ver. 35.
[h] vers. 29, 36. 2 Sa. 7. 12.
[i] 2 Sa. 7. 13. *cf.* Ps. 122. 5. *cf.* Is. 9. 6, 7.
[j] Ps. 50. 6. Ps. 97. 6. Ps. 150. 1.
[k] *cf.* Ps. 22. 25.

"of Jehovah's loving-kindness: with my mouth will I make known Thy faithfulness to all generations. For I have said, Loving-kindness shall be built up for ever: in the very heavens shall Thy righteousness be exalted." This is what he says in view of the covenant which the next verse declares. Upon earth, indeed, things may seem for the present to be in conflict with this; and from the Jewish stand-point the testimony of many generations now might seem to be against it. The tree of David's house is leveled to the ground and Israel are wanderers among the nations. But the heavens have for faith another story to tell, since the Crucified has become the Glorified; and they will have a marvelous witness to give when the fruits of the cross shall be seen in the multitude of the redeemed in heaven, soon to be seen in His train as He comes forth from thence, not merely King of Israel, but King of kings.

(*b*) The covenant is now affirmed as from Jehovah's lips: it is said and sworn. The wondrous tenderness of God's oath for such as we are, the apostle bids us consider, in his epistle to the Hebrews (chap. vi. 16–18). In fact, the whole idea of "covenant" is one which speaks of gracious adaptation to our infirmity. The covenant with David here—while a greater than David is surely to be seen in it—has its reason in this, that it is to David himself that it is given, and for the assurance of others with him. We must not go back of this, and argue, as so many have, a covenant in eternity between the Father and the Son, as if such could be needed between the Persons of the Godhead, one in eternal counsel. Surely, spite of its large adoption by theologians, this is only the introduction of human thoughts into a sphere to which they cannot belong. A contract of such sort would naturally imply some diversity of thought where none is possible, and help to foster the unworthy notion of the cross being the reconciliation of the Father to us, instead of God's love to the world being declared in the gift of His beloved Son. Of such a use of covenant Scripture knows nothing—can know nothing. Covenant with David we can understand well enough, and bless God for His tenderness to men in such a pledge. A pledge *to Him* Christ *could* not need. Yet that in no way hinders our seeing in David the One who is the Centre of the eternal purposes, the One expression and justification of Divine grace.

David was indeed the chosen of God, as the seventy-eighth psalm has emphasized; and this, not without a certain character in him which is pointed out there also, spite of his dreadful failure. He is in this only the mere shadow of the King that was to come, but still the shadow. In Christ "David" is indeed, in fulfillment of that name, the "Beloved"; and "My Servant" was all through, the character in which He acted, who exchanged the "form of God" for this "form" (Phil. ii). It is in this way that God Himself announces Him in the fullest prophecy of Him that can be found in the Old Testament (Isa. lii. 13–liii). And it is in that prophecy as here that His "seed" is spoken of: "He shall see a seed; He shall prolong His days; and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand." Here, His seed also is to be "established for ever, and His throne be built up from generation to generation." But we shall have more of this later in the psalm.

c (6-8): the glory of God.
(i.) none like Him.
(ii.) a relation of contrast.
(iii.) the full realization.

For [l]who in the expanse can be compared to Jehovah?
[who] among the [m]sons of the mighty can be likened to Jehovah?
God is greatly to be [n]feared in the council of the saints,
and to be reverenced above all round about him.
Jehovah, God of hosts, who is [o]mighty like thee, Jah?
and thy [p]faithfulness is round about thee.
Thou rulest the pride of the [q]sea:
when its waves arise, *thou* [r]stillest them.
Thou hast crushed [s]Rahab, as one that is slain:
with thy strong arm thou hast [t]scattered thine enemies.
Thine are the [u]heavens, thine also is the [v]earth:
the world and its fullness, *thou* hast [w]founded them:
The [x]north and the [y]south, *thou* hast created them:
Tabor and Hermon [z]sing for joy at thy Name.
Thine is an arm with might:
[a]strong is thy hand, exalted thy right hand.

d (9-12): nature prostrate.
(i.) He rules the rebels.
(ii.) defeats enemies.
(iii.) possesses what is His.
(iv.) His creation.

e (13-17): His government.
(i.) in power.

l Ps. 86. 8. Ps. 113. 5.
m Ps. 29. 1. Ps. 82. 1.
n Ps. 96. 4. Heb. 12. 28.
o Ps. 50 1. 1 Sa. 2. 2.
p ver. 2. Mal. 3. 6.
q Ps. 65. 7. Ps. 93. 3, 4. Job 38. 8-11.
r Ps. 107. 23-29. *cf.* Matt. 8 23-27.
s Ps. 87. 4. Is. 51. 9, 10.
t Ps. 68. 1, 2. Ex. 15. 6, 7.
u Ps. 8. 3.
v Ps. 24. 1, 2.
w Job 38. 4-6. Ps. 104. 5.
x Job 26. 7.
y Job 9. 9.
z Ps. 148. 9. Is. 44. 23; Is. 55. 12.
a Ex. 15. 6; Ps. 118. 16.

Again the heavens come in with their witnessing praise, and the "congregation of the holy ones" would at first thought be, for a Jew inevitably, the angelic host. When we take into consideration the deeper meaning here, they may be in this application the "seed" that has been spoken of, royal and heavenly, who will, as that, proclaim His faithfulness and the wonder of His grace.

(*c*) From this the psalmist turns to consider the glory of God. To put the question is to answer it—where is one like Him far as infinite space extends? and the sons of the mighty—perhaps rather of might (a "plural of majesty") —who among them can be compared to Jehovah? Think of Him in connection with the assembled wisdom of the holy ones, He is an object only of reverent fear to and above them all. Nay, he is the Immutable God of hosts, whom they all serve: where then can there be might like that of Jah? using the strong, decisive word: and His faithfulness—here is the comfort of it all—is all about Him, commensurate with the outgoing of His glorious power.

(*d*) From thence the psalmist looks round upon nature, to claim it all for Him. The sea is the very type of unruled strength and pride; but He stills the tossing of its angry waves. Rahab, that name of pride, Egypt—and here history furnishes him with the experience,—lay before His might crushed and as if slain: enemies to Him, He scattered them. The heavens too are His,—the earth; yea, the inhabited world with all that men count to be their treasures: the north with its darkness, and frost; the south with its teeming plenty: they are His as Creator of them. And they exult—Tabor and Hermon, the visible types before the eyes of Israel—sing for joy in His Name.

(*e*) Thus having seen all nature prostrate at His feet, the psalmist turns once more to consider the character of the divine government upon earth. This power of which he has been speaking is its first essential: absolute power is a necessity for perfect and universal government. "An arm with might" is therefore here put foremost.

But right rule is service, and love is the spirit of service; which to be effectual must be discriminative—must have respect to all differences, all relationships. And such is the character of divine rule which is now announced: righteousness and judgment—not a sentiment of right merely, but maintained executively—are the basis of this government; while loving-kindness and truth, in corresponding activity, go before the face of the glorious King. As the type and expression of this the perfect Servant will be upon the throne in the days to which all these

(ii) in discriminating love.

(iii.) in manifestation.
(iv.) the experience.
(v.) the issue for those with God.
2 (18-37): The covenant defined.
a (18-23): the power given.
(i.) the King Supreme.

Righteousness and judgment are the [b]basis of thy throne:
[c]loving-kindness and truth go before thy face.
Happy are the people that know the [d]signal-sound:
they shall walk, Jehovah, in the [e]light of thy countenance.
In thy name shall they [f]exult all the day,
and in thy righteousness shall they be [g]exalted.
For thou art the glory of their strength,
and by thy [h]favor shall our horn be exalted.
For Jehovah is our [i]shield;*
and the Holy One of Israel our [j]King.

* Or, "our shield belongeth unto Jehovah, and to the Holy One."

b Ps. 97. 2.
c Ps. 85. 13.
d *cf.* Nu. 10. 1–10. Ps. 81. 3–5. Ps. 98. 6.
e Ps. 4. 6. Ps. 80. 3.
f Ps. 34. 1, 2.
g Ps. 37. 34. *cf.* Is. 60. 13, 14.
h Ps. 30. 7. Ps. 75. 10.
i Ps. 84. 9.
j Ps. 74. 12. Ps. 95. 3.

psalms look forward: all judgment His because He is the Son of man (John v. 22, 27).

And in this, too, the third feature is anticipated: it is a government in which the divine Ruler does not withdraw Himself from His people, but on the contrary seeks to be known and manifest Himself to them: the people who know the signal-sound—the trumpet-call by which as in the wilderness Israel was summoned to attention—shall walk in the light of His countenance. Blessed indeed are such: "in Thy Name shall they exult all the day; and in Thy righteousness shall they be exalted."

The issue of their being thus with God is stated in the last verse in this section, and applied to Israel: "For Thou art the glory of their strength"—the One through whom it becomes so great, and so real a cause of rejoicing; "and by Thy favor shall *our* horn be exalted." Israel, conformed to the divine conditions of blessing, shall find this fulfilled to them.

(ii.) We now come to look at the terms of the covenant which Jehovah, the True and Faithful and Almighty, has made and sworn. And these are declared with a fullness and earnestness of detail which show how much the heart of the divine Speaker is in His words.

(*a*) First, the Mighty One on whom Jehovah has laid help is brought before us, and His might is seen to be God-given might. He is true man and dependent,—a thing which, as to David himself, needs no argument, but which is true also of Him who has taken the place of Man upon earth, to hold it not in mere semblance, but reality. In Him the higher and lower kingdoms, of which the books of Samuel and Kings so preach to us, come together, and the King sits (as is said of Solomon) "on the throne of Jehovah," but here as the true Image as well as Representative, of Jehovah Himself. This is as far as the psalm before us goes, but still it permits us to see a Figure greater than that of David, One whom David in Spirit owns to be his Lord, even though after the flesh He is his Son.

But the first verse here shows us, in connection with what follows, the action of the higher kingdom, of which the last section has spoken. "For Jehovah is our Shield; and the Holy One of Israel is our King." The David upon whom help is laid takes not away—as many an Israelitish king did—from the simplicity of this. The man after God's own heart was this, in that with all his failure, he never swerved from the confession of God. His psalms tell us what God was to him. And He whom he represents in this picture is the One who in His blessed work has given God such a throne as alone He could delight in on the earth. "Jehovah our Shield—the Holy One": never could such things have been joined together, had not He, the Mediator, joined them. Thus the ark of the covenant, with its double material, holding and enshrining Jehovah's law, declares Him, as well as the golden mercy-seat, which was His throne in the midst of the people.

(ii.) the Helper.

Then spakest thou in vision of thy pious one, and saidst,
I have laid help upon a [k]mighty one:
I have exalted one [l]chosen from the people.

(iii.) anointed.

I have found David my [m]servant:
with my holy oil have I [n]anointed him;

(iv.) experience.

With whom my hand shall be firm,
and mine arm shall [o]strengthen him.

(v.) the issue.

No [p]enemy shall exact from him,
nor son of perversity afflict him.

(vi.) mastery of foes.

And I will [q]beat down his adversaries before his face,
and smite down those that hate him.

b (24-28): the establishment of his power.

(i.) representative authority.

And my [r]faithfulness and my loving-kindness shall be with him,
and in my name shall his [s]horn be exalted.

(ii.) its extension.

And I will set his hand in the [t]sea,
and his right hand in the rivers.

(iii.) God His sanctuary.

He shall cry unto me, Thou art my [u]Father,
my Mighty One and the [v]Rock of my salvation.

k cf. Is.63.1-5.
l Ps. 78. 70.
m Ps. 18, title.
ver. 3.
Ps. 116. 16.
n 1 Sa.16.12, 13.
o Ps. 80. 17. *cf.* Is. 42. 1.
p Ps. 18. 17-19, 37, 38.
q 2 Sa. 7.1,9. *cf.* Ps.110.1.
r vers. 1, 2.
s Ps. 132. 17.
t cf. Ps. 72.8.
u cf. 2 Sa. 7. 14. *cf.* Ps. 2. 7.
v Ps. 18. 2.

And may not this be the reason for the "then" of the next verse, which otherwise seems without sufficient connection with what goes before it—"*then* spakest Thou in vision of Thy Pious One"? that is, as being Israel's Shield and King, *then*, when the need discovered itself, Thou showedst Thou hadst provided for it? This was, of course, true of David, while faith with its longer sight can see much more. This title—"pious one"—which we have often met before, speaks directly of heart for God, the character needed by one who steps forth for Him. And thus was David in his time the "mighty one," and in this way alone can any find true might. He, too, was "one chosen from the people"—that is, from the mass undistinguished in men's eyes. Among these in grace, our blessed Lord was found.

Next we see Him as the Anointed One—the Christ: the Spirit of God being the Unction in His case. As "servant" He is marked again; for this is how the Spirit of God comes upon Him, rising up from those Jordan-waters, in which John's hearers had taken their place, "confessing their sins" and death the due of them. Into death, then, He (to fulfill all righteousness) must come for them; and thus He must now be anointed for His work. The Father's voice declares His delight in Him, and John then proclaims as the Lamb of God, the unblemished Sacrifice. How perfectly all this unites together to proclaim what He has done!

But what follows carries us on into what is future yet—His manifest kingly glory. Jehovah's hand is firm with Him, His arm strengthens Him; no enemy exacts upon Him, no son of perversity afflicts Him: His adversaries are beaten down before His face. Yet "David and his afflictions" were as true a type of Him as was David in his glory; and what seems but in contrast with His glory here is in fact but the manifestation of His fullest glory.

(*b*) We have now the establishment of His power, first defining it as representative authority: His horn being exalted in *Jehovah's Name*, He is the true King of Israel, acting for and glorifying God in all things; so that His faithfulness and loving-kindness are ever with Him. Then His kingdom fills the full limits of God's gift to Abraham, as far as the Sea (the Mediterranean) and the rivers (the Euphrates and the Nile). His relation to God is that of Son with a Father, in whom is His sanctuary of strength, His might and His salvation. Yea, He is first-born Son, and thus His kingdom swells into universal empire: He becomes supreme over the kings of the earth. With Him God's covenant stands fast

(iv.) His earthlyplace.

(v.) God with Him.

c (29–32): holiness manifested.

(i.) perpetual favor.

(ii.) if breach come in—

(iii.) and profanation.

(iv.) they shall taste of holiness.

d (33–35): but no failure.

(i.) with God.

(ii.) nor change.

(iii.) holiness itselfpledged.

e (36, 37): the issue.

(i.) stability.

(ii.) which establishes.

Also I will make him [my] [w]first-born,
supreme as to the [x]kings of the earth.
My loving-kindness will I keep for him for [y]ever,
and my [z]covenant shall stand fast with him.
And his [a]seed I will establish for ever,
and his [b]throne as the days of the heavens.
If his children [c]forsake my law,
and walk not in my judgments,—
If they [d]profane my statutes
and keep not my commandments,—
I also will visit their revolt with the [e]rod
and their iniquity with strokes,
But my loving-kindness will I not [f]utterly take from him,
nor belie my [g]faithfulness:
My covenant will I not profane,
nor [h]alter what is gone out of my lips.
Once by my holiness have I sworn,
that I will not [i]lie unto David.
His seed shall endure for ever,
and his throne as the [j]sun before me:
As the moon shall it be established for ever,
and [as] the witness in the expanse is firm. Selah.

w *cf.* Heb. 1. 6.
x *cf.* Ps. 72. 10, 11. *cf.* Rev. 19. 16.
y *cf.* Ps. 72. 17. *cf.* Ps. 55. 3.
z ver. 3.
a vers. 4. 36. *cf.* Acts 2. 30. Ps. 132. 11.
b *cf.* Ps. 45. 6.
c 2 Sa. 7. 14. *cf.* 1 Kl. 11. 1–13.
d *cf.* Dan. 9. 8.
e 1 Kl. 11. 31.
f 1 Ki. 11. 32. 2 Sa. 7. 15.
g vers. 1, 2.
h *cf.* Rom. 11. 29.
i *cf.* Nu. 23. 19. Tit. 1. 2.
j *cf.* Ps. 72. 17. Jer. 33. 20–22.

forever, His love being unchangeably with Him. David is evidently here only a faint, though true, type of wider glory.

(*c*) When His seed are contemplated, and not as to Himself, as if there could be doubt as to Him,—the necessary conditions of divine holiness appear. Yet His seed too shall be established for ever, even as His throne unchangeable. But here failure is foreseen as possible, and such an event provided for. In this case, holiness must be manifested in chastening: the character of God must be maintained. Christ is not contemplated here, but David's posterity in general, spite of whose unfaithfulness, the throne will be preserved. In fact in millennial days there will be a "prince" in Israel, of whom Ezekiel speaks, who will doubtless be of David's seed; for the house of David is distinctly mentioned for blessing at that time (Zech. xii. 7, 8, 10, 12). That he is prince only is of course due to the fact that he is but the vice-gerent of the real and glorious King.

(*d*) But with Christ, the true David, there can be no failure—no breach therefore of covenant in His case. Here holiness itself is pledged on His behalf, for by it God has sworn to Him, and cannot recall it.

(*e*) The promise to the seed is therefore reiterated, and the stability of His throne again positively assured; the comparisons made naturally carrying up our thoughts as Christians to the heavens to which that throne belongs, and where also a glorious fulfillment of this seed shall be found in the days to which all this points forward, when the thrones around the Throne shall be filled with a company which Johu in Spirit foresees and pictures for us;—a company that shall cast their crowns at the feet of the Lamb and cry: "Thou art worthy, for Thou hast redeemed us to God out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign over the earth."

Does there not even seem to be contained in the symbols that are used a reference to the kingdom of Christ in its full sun-like glory, as He represents it, and then in those lesser planetary thrones around the throne, where the light is but reflected, like the moon's, and yet where stability is assured also? as it is said

2 (38-51): The adverse side.
α (38-41): God the adversary.
(i.) to His King.
(ii.) to His servant.
(iii.) his fences gone.

And *thou* hast [k]rejected and cast off:
thou hast overflowed [with wrath] against thine anointed.
Thou hast made [l]void the covenant with thy servant:
thou hast profaned his crown in the earth.
Thou hast broken through all his [m]fences:
thou hast brought his strong-holds to ruin.

k Ps. 44. 9. Ps. 74. 1.
l *cf.* Ps.78.59-64. *cf.* Gal.3.15.
m Ps. 80. 12. Is. 5. 5.

of Israel's blessing in that day, "Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for Jehovah shall be thine everlasting Light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended" (Isa. lx. 20).

Here, plainly, the sun being stable establishes the moon, which as it cannot shine without him, with him cannot but shine.

2. We are now suddenly, however, plunged in darkness so extreme, that the very brightness before seems to add intensity to it. Of course it is unbelief: for there is no darkness like this, but through unbelief. Of course, the world is always a dark place, which the One Light itself shines on without illuminating, as it is said, "the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." But that too is the darkness of unbelief, and it is only too easily thus accounted for.

But here we have to see, not the darkness of the world, but of those who are not of the world, not of darkness,—the unbelief of believers, than which nothing else can be so distressing,—so humiliating to realize. Not that it had not plenty of arguments, no doubt: arguments that contradict what are first principles,—for him who believes in God at all, not to be argued about, but to be received as self-evident. It was but a question about God, entertained as a question, which darkened paradise itself to our first parents; and then they too in paradise even had arguments. Why a forbidden tree at all? why the knowledge of good and evil forbidden? why forbidden to be as God in knowing this? So the devil became man's trusted teacher, and has been such ever since.

Arguments! that begin in a suspicion, which "makes the meat it feeds on"! arguments drawn from a world that is out of course, forgetting what has put it out of course! and that are meant at best honestly to prove whether men it is that are fallen or God is! Ah, how the eyes are cleared by the simple apprehension of what is so obvious, that "God is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man, that He should repent"; and that "clouds and darkness are round about Him" is not the *first step* in disproof that "God is light."

How strange, perhaps, to find arguments of this kind in an inspired psalm! but how good that God has permitted thus all the conflict and contradiction that can be in the hearts of His people to come out, as it were with a strange, unconscious simplicity, and to be poured out to *Him*, who in the serene glory of His presence, not so much meets the arguments, as shines forth in His own blessedness, and they are gone, as a dream on waking. Job-like, our eyes see Him the Unrepenting, and we it is who abhor ourselves, and repent in dust and ashes. So it is here: the unbelief is poured out here,—seems to find no answer, passes and is gone, and in one single, joyous, out-burst at the end we learn that it is gone. No argument is there at all, but the sweet adoring rapture which says all—

"Blessed be Jehovah for ever!
Amen and Amen."

But we must go through the strange dark road that leads us thither.

(*a*, *b*) "And *Thou* hast rejected and cast off: Thou hast overflowed with wrath against Thine anointed. Thou hast made void the covenant of Thy servant: Thou hast profaned his crown to the ground." Absalom's rebellion might furnish the occasion for such complaint; but for the full meaning we must go beyond this. David's seed has long apparently been set aside, and the earthly throne has had no tenant: it might seem as if it would never have again. So have argued Christians themselves who should know better, appealing to Christ being upon

(iv.) weakness, so that any can plunder.

All that [n]pass by the way plunder him:
he is become a [o]reproach unto his neighbors.

b (42–45): other adversaries.

Thou hast exalted the right hand of his [p]adversaries:
thou hast made all his enemies [q]rejoice.

(i.) but whose strength is from God.

Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword,
and not made him to [r]stand in the battle.

(ii.) the battle against him.

Thou hast made his brightness to cease,
and [s]cast his throne down to the ground.

(iii.) his glory gone.

Thou hast shortened the days of his prime:
thou hast covered him with [t]shame. Selah.

(iv.) his vigor gone.

c (46–51): remember, Jehovah!

(i.) for ever?

[u]How long, Jehovah, wilt thou hide thyself? for ever?
shall thy [v]wrath burn like fire?

(ii.) subject to death.

Remember how [w]short-lived I am:
why hast thou created for vanity all the children of men?

(iii.) with no power of resurrection.

What man liveth that shall not see death?
shall he deliver his soul from the [x]power of Sheol? Selah.

(iv) failure with Thee?

Where, Lord, are thy [y]former loving-kindnesses,
[which] thou swarest unto David in thy truth?

(v.) of Thy government?

Remember, Lord, the [z]reproach of thy servants—
that I bear in my bosom [that of] all the many peoples—

(vi.) the limit reached.

Wherewith thine enemies, Jehovah, have reproached,—
wherewith they have reproached the steps of thine [a]anointed.

3 (52): The worship of faith.

[b]Blessed be Jehovah for ever!
[c]Amen and amen.

n *cf.* Lam. 1. 12.
o Ps. 79. 4. Ps. 80. 6. Jer. 19. 8.
p *ctr.* ver. 22. *cf.* Lam. 1. 3, 5, 10.
q Lam. 1. 21. Lam. 2. 15, 16.
r *cf.* Ps. 78. 9. Deu. 28. 7, 25.
s *cf.* Jer. 52. 10, 11. ver. 39.
t Ps. 44. 9.
u Ps. 79. 5.
v Ps. 6. 1.
w *cf.* Ps. 71. 18.
x Ps. 49. 7-9. *cf.* Ps. 86. 13.
y vers. 20, 21, etc.
z ver. 41.
a Ps. 2. 2.
b Ps. 41. 13. Ps. 72. 18, 19. Ps. 106. 48. Ps. 150.
c *cf.* Rev. 1. 6.

the throne of heaven as if that were the fulfillment of the covenant here. But David's throne is not the throne of heaven; and the greater glory yet cannot, as that, include the less. Man's sin has here come in to interrupt and delay a blessing which, through the changeless grace of God, it cannot set aside; and the divine declaration has already provided for the understanding of the present suspension of the promise, though the delay be long. Meanwhile the utter collapse of the nation has caused the gap in the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy which God has filled in with New Testament blessing and much wider and fuller grace.

(*c*) What follows here is the picture of a ruin familiar to us all. Only instead of being an argument against God's faithfulness, it is an illustration of it. In the end that is approaching the remnant of the Jewish people will undoubtedly take up and plead with God the words which the Spirit of God has prepared for them in this psalm. Their fleeting generations passing away into Sheol without power of recovery from it, and under the wrath of God against sin, are put before Him, to plead in their need and hopelessness, save through Him, the renewal of those loving-kindnesses sworn to David in His truth. They too, His servants, though under the reproach of all the nations round, shall they not be remembered by that holy but merciful government—the reproach under which they now are being also the reproach of Christ Himself? So it will be necessarily when antichrist is carrying away the multitudes with the "strong delusion" in which apostate Christendom and apostate Israel will come to a common end. Here the limit of God's patience will in fact be reached, and in their extremity the true Joseph, the rejected of His brethren, will be made known to them as their Deliverer.

3. But nothing of this is here. Only the pleading of the covenant, David's covenant, those "sure mercies," whose fulfillment to them has been so long delayed. Here in place of that fulfillment is, as already said, the out-burst of joy and praise with which now the book ends. Jehovah! Blessed be He for ever! Even though as yet upon earth all seems to be contradiction to the promise and faithfulness of God,—Jehovah He is, the covenant-God,—the Unchangeable. Not merely when we see, but when we see not, let us bless His Name. Faith *is* where we see not: here is its glory to God and its victory; for victorious it is and must be: shout it in the face of all His foes,

"Blessed be Jehovah for ever!
Amen, and Amen."

BOOK IV.

The fourth book of the Psalms corresponds in this way with the book of Numbers; and it opens manifestly with a strain of the wilderness, a prayer of Israel's divinely-appointed leader, and in which is heard the lament over the generation dying there, but expanded and interpreted for us as a broad general lesson as to man's condition, sad enough, but most profitable to be learned. From this, however, as its starting-point it goes on to very different themes. Failed man does not occupy us, as he does not where his judgment is realized aright, but Another displaces him, and the results begin to be put before us from the next psalm on. The earth has found a new Adam, in glorious contrast to the first; and, put into His hand, it bursts out into the glad spring-time of eternal summer. Man is recovered to God, and the bond that unites him is one that cannot now be severed.

In the most beautiful way is this mediatorial link put before us. In the first subdivision of the book it is His spiritual perfection, abiding in Him from whom all others have departed, and this bringing in for Him the Creator, and making all nature subject to Him, which thus comes into sabbatic joy and is established in its new Head: "the world also is established that it cannot be moved."

Thus the breach with God being removed, in the second subdivision Jehovah, banished by man's sin, comes back to it, to fill it with blessing. He reigns gloriously, amid universal gladness.

But this is evidently not as yet the complete view; and therefore we begin again in the third subdivision of the book. Here, in the first psalm (the 101st) the Ruler of the earth for God is seen and the character of His righteous rule. But where is He to be found? In the next psalm, the time of blessing is looked at as at hand, Jehovah ready to appear in glory, and build up Zion, and execute His purposes of blessing for the earth. But He who sees all this, and with his heart full of it, is Himself under the hand of God, nay, His wrath. His days are shortened, and (quite after the manner of the ninetieth psalm with which we began) He contrasts His brief years coming to their end with the eternity of God. He seems one involved Himself in the ruin of the old creation, and, if *He* be the King of Zion, with no hope of filling that place. His voice comes to a close with this appeal to the Eternal. We wait for the answer: an astonishing one it is. This suffering, dying Man is *Himself* the Eternal: God and man are one in Him; all creation is in His hand, and the children of His servants serve Him in all their generations.

So the 103d psalm follows with its song of forgiveness and redemption; the mercy of Jehovah being from age to age on them that fear Him; and the next psalm celebrates Him as Creator also. The last two psalms of the book close it with Israel's praise and heartfelt confession of their past, now cleared away.

SUBD. 1.

The first subdivision has already been sufficiently characterized. Christ is here seen as the perfect and unfallen Man, the uniting bond of Creator and crea-

BOOK IV. (Psalms xc.–cvi.)

The failed first man replaced by the Second, and the world established under His hand.

SUBD. 1. (Ps. xc.–xciii.)

Christ the uniting-bond of Creator and creation.

Ps. xc.

[1]PSALM XC.

The first man.

A prayer of [d]Moses, the man of God.

1 (1, 2): The Lord of life. (i.) ever. (ii.) contrasted with all else thus.

LORD, *thou* hast been a [e]habitation for us
in all generations.
Before the [f]mountains were brought forth,
or thou hadst formed the earth and the world,
and [g]from age to age art thou, O Mighty!

d Deu. 33. 1. *cf.* Num. 14. 26–39.
e Deu. 33. 27. *cf.* Ps. 71. 3.
f Prov. 8. 25, 26.
g Ex. 3. 14, 15. *cf.* Jno. 8. 58. *cf.* Ps. 103. 17.

tion. In it we have the personal link; the second being the actual salvation of the earth by Jehovah coming back to it again, the renewal of relationship thus with it, and in a more manifest and glorious way than ever.

PSALM XC.

The preface to this is necessarily the picture of man as fallen away from God —the first man, as Adam's seed may be most justly called, if Christ be in His day but a Second. The history of the world has fully proved this fall, and the broad fact of death being upon all the race has put God's seal upon it. It is this last upon which Moses naturally dwells as the most concise and clearest argument. It is what the law also has demonstrated by experiment, conclusively, in saying, "the man that doeth these things shall *live* in them," and "the soul that sinneth, it shall *die*." The current views of the law have removed all this from the field of practical observation and common knowledge into the unseen future, so that men may dream and speculate upon it as they list. God's purpose is that it should be present, definite certainty, that "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified." The very effectiveness with which it gives this has been by the strange perversion of unbelief made an argument *against* its having a meaning which is too plain to be the right one!

1. But if death be that which has come in through sin, then life—immortal existence here—is the alternative; and for this man was originally created. It was necessarily conditional upon his continuing with God in the uprightness which he had at the beginning. Dependent he was, and must remain; for without this no creature-blessing is possible. "In God we live and move and have our being," and the recognition of this is uprightness for us. This is the key to the statement with which the psalm here begins.

"Lord, Thou hast been a habitation for us, in all generations": not, as in the common version, "*our* habitation"; for, alas, man has not profited by that which God has kept ever open to him. Paradise indeed has vanished from the earth, but the door of the Father's house, which he has left,—for naturally, God being the "Father of spirits," "we are also His offspring" (Heb. xii. 9; Acts xvii. 28),—has never been closed against him. "The Lord"—not here Jehovah, but the Ruler of the earth and men—is always the Lord of life; and He is the Mighty and Eternal One: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, and from age to age, Thou art, O Mighty" (*El*). Here then is abundant resource, the Fountain of life ever open; the link with eternity in the Eternal God Himself, never distant from His creatures. How has it availed for man? how, after all, has he profited by it?

2 (3-6): Man under death.
(i.) by His will.
(ii) contrasted with Himself.
(iii.) the realization.
(iv.) frailty.

Thou makest frail man to [h]return to dust,*
and sayest, Return, ye children of men!
But a [i]thousand years in thy sight are as yesterday
when it is past,
and [as] a watch in the night.
Thou carriest them away as a [j]flood:
they are [as] a [k]sleep:
in the [l]morning they are like grass [that] groweth up;
In the morning it flourisheth and groweth up:
by the evening it is [m]cut down and withereth.

3 (7-10): The holiness of it.
(i.) the cause.
(ii.) in judgment.
(iii.) full realization.

For we are consumed in thine [n]anger,
and by thy hot wrath are troubled.
Thou hast set our [o]iniquities before thee:
our [p]secret [sins] in the light of thy countenance.
For all our days pass away in thine [q]overflowing [wrath],
we spend our years as a [r]thought.

* "Crumbling."

h Gen. 3. 19. Eccl. 12. 7. *ctr.* 1 Cor. 15. 50-57.
i 2 Pet. 3. 8.
j *cf.* Gen. 6. 17.
k Job 20. 8. Ps. 73. 20.
l Ps. 103. 15, 16. Is. 40. 6-8.
m Job 14. 1, 2. *cf.* Ps. 102. 11.
n *cf.* Ps. 95. 10, 11. Ps. 39. 10-13.
o Ps. 50. 21.
p Ps. 19. 12. *cf.* Jno. 4. 16-19.
q *cf.* Gen. 5. 29.
r Jas. 4. 14.

2. The answer is plain: it is no matter of speculation. *Once*, and but once, in the days before the flood, a man had walked with God 365 years of life, and then, without seeing death, been removed to heaven to walk with Him there. That life of Enoch, on which the shadow of death had never fallen, might suffice to show the possibility. Practically it might be left out in such an estimate as this: the answer remains really unaffected, or made the more solemn only by that possibility unavailed of: "Thou makest frail man (*Enosh*) return to dust; and sayest, Return, ye children of men." So God had to decide. It was His will, yet not of His will. And there remained but as contrast with His feeble creatures, that eternity of His into which they entered not: the thousand years that transcended even the life of a Methuselah, in His sight as but the *remembrance* of the past yesterday"; and in its darkness of shadow, only "as a watch in the night."

But however brief, there is a long lesson in that brevity, and in that shadowed life, which is from God. The psalmist is pondering it before Him, and cannot let it go. "*Thou* carriest them away as with a flood"—"—"washest them away," literally—no doubt it is of the deluge he is thinking: manifest judgment, and yet generalized here, as the lot of every one, though he go singly. "They are a sleep": what is appointed for man's refreshment, though a sign of his frailty and dependence, yet but an incident, becomes, as it were, the whole thing. They themselves are that—a sleep without awaking!

The images of nature over which he was once appointed lord, nay, of the grass under his feet, become images in which he may see himself, now leveled to the general condition of that which was his kingdom only, and subject to him. "Like grass which groweth up:—in the morning it flourisheth and groweth up; by the evening it is cut down and withereth."

3. Such then is, very obviously, man's condition: too obviously, it might be thought, to need the comment. But this is not ended yet; and the reason of it is now dwelt upon, and owned to God. The cause of it is His anger, which is consuming us, His hot wrath, which distresses us. But why such anger? Ah, it is not the unreasoning glow of passion, but discriminating judgment that weighs things in the evenest balances. "Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee:" and, with knowledge from which nothing can escape, "our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance." Thus in the full realization of what is here—"all our days pass away in Thine overflowing wrath:" upon us with that steady per-

(iv.) vanity.

The [s]days of our years are seventy years;
and if by reason of strength they be eighty years,
yet is the [t]pride of them but travail and vanity:
for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

4 (11-17): The practical use of the experience.
(i.) the truth of fear.

Who knoweth the [u]power of thine anger?
even [v]according to the fear of thee is thine overflowing [wrath].

(ii.) the service rendered.

So make us to know the [w]number of our days,
that we may acquire a heart of wisdom.

(iii.) return, Jehovah!

Return, Jehovah! [x]how long?
and let it [y]repent thee concerning thy servants.

(iv.) for true creature-experience.

[z]Satisfy us with thy loving-kindness in the morning,
that we may sing for joy and be [a]glad all our days.

(v.) compensation.

Make us glad [b]according to the days thou hast afflicted us,
and the years in which we have seen evil.

s ctr. Gen. 5. 27, etc.
t cf. Ps. 49. 11, 12.
u Ps. 76. 7.
v cf. Job 42. 5, 6.
w Ps. 39. 4. Deu. 32. 29.
x Ps. 6. 3.
y Ps. 135. 14.
z Ps. 36. 8. Ps. 63. 5, 6.
a cf. Phil. 4. 4.
b cf. Is. 40. 2.

sistence under which a Job might plead, "How long wilt Thou not look away from me?" and the psalmist, "Look away from me, that I may recover strength." "We spend our days as a thought": perhaps, rather, "a moan."

Then comes the reiterated statement of man's vanity, the experience, now shrunk from near a thousand to seventy or eighty years, in which man's pride, if it last so long, goes out in travail. Soon cut off indeed, we fly away.

4. But this experience has, therefore, its practical use, to which the rest of the psalm is devoted; and here it turns from contemplation and confession into prayer. "Who knoweth," the psalmist asks, "the power of Thine anger?" One might think He had pressed it heavily upon man; but how could He do less? look, after all, at the folly that is bound up in man's heart! He only strives to banish thought, "kill time," put away conviction, do Satan's work for him as completely as possible. And yet no thought can exceed the truth of God's anger against sin: "even according to the fear of Thee is Thine overflowing wrath."

Let us not shun, then, the reality of things, he asks: let us profit by it: "so make us to number our days, that we may acquire a heart of wisdom." Here is the "beginning of wisdom"; for here is the "fear of the Lord," which is that. Here the soul finds the need it has of Him, turns to Him, seeks to have Him turn to it: and so the psalmist: "Return, Jehovah"—not simply "Lord" now, but the nearer name of covenant-goodness,—"and let it repent Thee concerning Thy servants." For as soon as man repents, God has declared that He will repent of the evil that He thought to do to them (Jer. xviii. 8); and the story of Jonah and Nineveh is a precious illustration of His mercies in this way.

But to avert His judgment is comparatively a little thing. The heart truly touched longs after Himself. How can a creature be satisfied apart from his Creator? "Satisfy us with Thy loving-kindness in the morning, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days." This joy in God, how rarely is it to be found after this fashion! our days come generally clad in much soberer apparel than is implied in this. And yet this is not less than we may all of us possess, and should possess. Nay, the soul taught of God in His wondrous ways of grace, claims compensation even for the affliction it has known before. "Make us glad according to the days Thou hast afflicted us, and for the years in which we have seen evil." Think of compensation from a judge for just judgment inflicted! But rather it is a Father's heart that is free to show itself in wiping off the tears that for a time were salutary. It was a discipline which he prays now may be effectual, the "work appear," and His "glory" shine out after the storm is passed; aye, and even "upon the children" afterwards.

(vi.) the result and limit of discipline.

Let [c]thy work appear unto thy servants,
and thy [d]glory upon their children:

(vii.) the perfect blessing.

Yea, let the [e]beauty of Jehovah our God be upon us
and [f]establish the work of our hands with regard to us,—
even the work of our hands, establish thou it.

[c] *cf.* Is. 52. 10.
[d] *cf.* Is. 40. 5.
[e] Ps. 27. 4.
[f] *cf.* Ps. 138. 8. *cf.* 1 Cor. 15. 58.

Ps. xci.

[2]PSALM XCI.

The Second Man.

1 (1, 2): The principle of perpetuity.

HE that [g]abideth in the secret place of the [h]Most High
shall lodge under the shadow of the [i]Almighty.

(i.) the promise.

I will say of [j]Jehovah, [He is] my [k]refuge and my [l]fortress:
my [m]God; I [n]trust in him.

(ii.) the response of the Dependent One.

[g] *cf.* Jno. 3. 12, 13.
[h] *cf.* Gen. 14. 18.
[i] *cf.* Gen. 17. 1. *cf.* Ps. 17. 8.
[j] *cf.* Ex. 6. 3.
[k] Ps. 142. 5.
[l] Ps. 18. 2.
[m] *cf.* Ps. 22. 1.
[n] *cf.* Ps. 16. 1.

The last verse closes with the prayer for perfect blessing, "the beauty of Jehovah our God upon us," nay, "the work of our hands" established, too. And this he is emphatic about: for "whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected" (1 Jno. ii. 5). The glory of God is indeed accomplished in finding not only a free way for His love to show itself, but fruit also from the reconciled heart, upon which He can put the seal of His own approbation.

Psalm XCI.

Thus the ruin of man has been seen, and it is utter. As a being made for a dependent life of immortal blessing, he has failed to maintain this; and death is the seal of condemnation, his taking from the earth in which he was placed. What follows death does not come into view, for it is not in question. It is death itself that is so complete an assurance that God has judged and set aside the creature He has made. Thus he has lost God as his habitation; and, though he take to heart the lesson of his judgment, and look back with desire of heart to the place whence he has fallen, the way is not yet found by which he shall be reinstated in it.

It is this that the ninety-first psalm begins to open up to us. The whole is not by any means told in it; but a commencement is made, and with what is first and central in its relation to it. We learn here of a *Second Man*—not called so, indeed, but most evidently in opposition to the universal condition of men as shown us in the preceding psalm, and designedly set before us in this character. It is One who *has* "made Jehovah, even the Most High, His habitation," and who can claim rightly all the consequences of this. No plague can come near Him, no power of the enemy prevail against him; heaven provides Him with a watchful and powerful escort; all nature is in agreement with Him: thus there is a Man who is entitled indeed to be called a "Second Man," though but a part of the truth about Him has yet been told.

1. The principle of perpetuity in life and blessing is first of all stated, and in terms which directly refer to the previous psalm. "He that abideth in the secret of the Most High shall lodge under the shadow of the Almighty." That is, the protection of One all-competent to protect is assured to the man who abides in the secret—or "dwells in the secret place"—of the Most High: the God who is going to take His place as that, in those millennial times which are to come for the earth,—King of kings and Lord of lords.

Manifestly, this is the "Lord" of the previous psalm, who has been a "habitation for us in all generations"; and, as plainly, this "habitation" is that very "secret," "or secret place"—of the Most High which it has shown us to have become such: man having dropped out of the knowledge of it, and lost the resulting blessing.

2 (3-8): The answer in preservation and deliverance.
(i.) from God.
(ii.) in the love of relationship.
(iii.) inward realization.
(iv.) nature at peace.
(v.) divine government.
(vi.) the end of the wicked.

For he shall deliver thee from the [o]snare of the trapper,—
from the destroying [p]pestilence.
He shall [q]cover thee with his feathers,
and beneath his wings shalt thou find refuge:
his [r]truth shall be shield and buckler.
Thou shalt not be [s]afraid of the terror of the night,—
for the [t]arrow that flieth by day:
For the [u]pestilence walking in darkness,—
for [v]destruction that wasteth at noon-day:
A [w]thousand shall fall by thy side,
and ten thousand at thy right hand,
[but] it shall not come [x]nigh thee.
Only with thine eyes shalt thou [y]behold,
and see the [z]reward of the wicked.

o *cf.* Mat.22. 15, etc.
p ver. 6.
q Ps. 61. 4. *cf.* De.33.12. *cf.* Ruth 2. 12.
r *cf.* Ps. 40. 10, 11.
s *cf.* Jno. 18. 3-9. Ps. 112. 7.
t *cf.* Jno. 9.4. *cf.* Jno.11.7 -9.
u *cf.* Mat. 4. 1, etc.
v *cf.* Lk. 13. 31, 31.
w *cf.* Ps.34.9 -14. *ctr.* Ps. 22.4 -6.
x *cf.* Rom.6. 9, 10.
y *cf.* Ps. 37. 34. z *cf.* 2 Thess. 1. 7-10.

When God appeared to the man who was to bring Israel out of Egypt, and gave him his commission to do so, Moses desires to know by what name he is to declare God to them. And the Name of God to-day is hidden from multitudes by a worse confusion than that which began at Babel. The day is yet to come when in all the earth "there shall be One Jehovah and His Name One" (Zech. xiv. 9). But these many names only reveal the practical estrangement of men from Him whose character His Name reveals. Little hope can there be naturally as to a creature who permits even the name of his God to slip away from him! But who abides in the secret place of the Most High? We have already had the answer.

Yet in the next verse a response is heard, which at first indeed may not seem to be as distinctly indicative of the Speaker as it afterwards is found to be: "I will say of Jehovah," he replies, "He is my Refuge and Fortress: my God: I trust in Him." Faith in all times would have answered in similar terms, it might be said: and this is true. The Spirit of Christ in all His people has indeed used the language of Christ, and of course, truly; yet how different after all is the One Voice from the others! That the voice of absolute Truth has spoken here is made known by the echoes it awakens around, and presently by that of God Himself which attests it. That this psalm was written of the Messiah, Satan surely knew when he quoted to Him the eleventh and twelfth verses with the comment, "If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down." And the whole structure of the book, as we have considered it, and shall do more at large, proves the same thing.

2. The words used are those of absolute dependence; and now another voice, which is that surely of the Spirit of prophesy, answers again with the assurance of how completely this faith is justified and made good. He has made God His refuge, and shall find it a perfect and absolute one: from the snare of the trapper and the pestilence alike He will deliver; and in the tender love of endeared relationship, covering with His feathers and the broad shelter of His outstretched wings,—love pledged to Him who has cast Himself entirely upon it, so that His truth becomes a shield and buckler.

The inward realization answers to this perfect care: no terror of the night, no arrow flying openly by day, alarms. Nature is at peace with Him with whom its God is: pestilence nor destruction touches Him; and the fall of thousands round Him only demonstrates the more the complete protection which the divine government throws round the Man whose sole reliance is in God. Only shall He see with His own eyes the end of the wicked.

3. A new division of the psalm begins here: which seems, at first sight, very much a repetition of what has been said before, but goes beyond it, and opens

3 (9-16): The Sanctuary-refuge.
(i.) Jehovah the Supreme.
(ii.) security.
(iii.) heavenly escort.
(iv.) casualty hindered.
(v.) divine government.
(vi.) His triumph.

Because *thou* hast [a]made Jehovah, [b]my refuge,
[even] the Most High, thy habitation,
There shall no evil befall thee,
nor plague come near thy [c]tent.
For he shall give his [d]angels charge respecting thee,
to [e]preserve thee in all thy ways.
Upon their hands they shall bear thee up,
lest thou [f]dash thy foot against a stone.
Thou shalt [g]tread upon the [h]lion and the [i]adder:
the young lion and the serpent shalt thou trample under foot.
Because he hath set his [j]love on me, I will deliver him:
I will [k]set him on high, because he hath [l]known my Name.

a cf. Mat.26. 53, 54.
b cf. Ps.22.26 with Ps.40. 3.
c cf. Jno. 1. 14.
d Mat.4.5–7, 11.
e cf. Lk. 22. 43.
f cf. Mt.1.20. *cf.* Mt.2.13–15, 19–23.
g cf. Gen. 3. 15.
h cf. 1 Pet.5. 8.
i cf. Is. 11.1–8.
j cf. Jno. 14. 31.
k cf. Eph. 1. 20–22.
l cf. Jno. 10. 15; *cf.* Jno. 17. 25.

the heavenly side of blessing. He has made Jehovah, the refuge of His saints, the Supreme, His habitation; and heaven opens towards Him in consequence. Notice the words here for the first time, "*my* refuge." It is but a hint indeed, for as yet there can be no more, but a real hint nevertheless, of such refuge opening now to others, through Him who has in fact never known nor sought any but in God. And He has *made* Him His habitation; not professed to do so, nor labored to do so, but done so—abode in God as a new and perfect Man, for whom no excuse is to be made, and no reduction from the full demand for absolute perfection. Hence evil has no hold on Him, nor opportunity against Him: "there shall no evil befall Thee, nor plague come near Thy tent." "*Tent*," mark: so that, with all the perfection of Manhood which is His, He is yet a Sojourner and Pilgrim upon the earth. He is not another man of the earth merely, a mere Adam that has never fallen: and who by virtue of that very unfallen state, *could never* have been a pilgrim. But here is One whose glory shines out in His very humiliation. He is a Wayfarer, not because a steward turned out of his stewardship; outside paradise, indeed, but not banished from it; One with His home in God, yet in an alien world, and whither should His steps be directed, but towards God His home, and in the place where His home is?

Thus even here heaven opens to Him. He is in a hostile world, and must have an escort; and angels are charged concerning Him, to keep Him in all His ways. Those blessed feet, so traveling through a place which is all in disorder, and might seem even hap-hazard, must be preserved from casualty.

But there is the power of the enemy also, "the lion and the adder"—force and craft. Both must give way to Him. He turns not aside, but tramples them under His feet. Good is ordained to victory, necessarily, or it would not be God that ruled: and that is, I suppose, why the number here is that of divine government. We do not see things work in this simple manner doubtless, and there is plenty of room left for exercise, and for faith. But the rule itself is absolute, and must be.

And now the voice of God Himself is heard; and He too owns and testifies to the Man in whom He delights. Heart has met heart: "because He has set His love upon Me, I will deliver Him." And here we find where His path necessarily ends: "I will set Him on high, because He has known My Name."

But this does not begin a new section, apparently, and therefore must come under the number which speaks of victory; at first sight difficult to understand or recognize as appropriate. Yet in fact this is the time of which it is said: "He has *gone up on high; He has led captivity captive;* He has received gifts for men." And this connects readily with the previous verse,—the power of the enemy trampled in the dust. Thus the structure reveals its significance; and

(vii.) perfect blessing.

(viii.) to eternity.

He shall [m]call on me, and I will answer him:
I will be with him in [n]strait,
I will [o]deliver him and [p]honor him.
With [q]length of days will I satisfy him,
and [r]show him my salvation.

Ps. xcii.

1 (1-5): Jehovah, the Supreme.

(i.) right to praise.

(ii.) for loving-kindness in opposite circumstances.

[3]PSALM XCII.

Sanctuary-praise.

A psalm-song for the [s]Sabbath-day.

IT is [t]good to give thanks to Jehovah:
and to psalm unto thy Name, O [u]Most High!
To [v]declare thy loving-kindness in the [w]morning
and thy faithfulness in the nights:

m Ps. 61.1,2.
n Ps. 63. 7-11.
o Ps. 40. 2.
p *cf.* Phil. 2. 9-11.
q Ps. 21. 1-7.
r Ps. 20. 1-5.

s *cf.* Lev. 23. 1-3. *cf.* Ps. 95. 11 with Ps. 85. 1.
t Ps. 135. 3. Ps. 147. 1. Ps. 33. 1.
u Ps. 91. 1.
v Ps. 26. 7.
w *cf.* Nu. 9. 15, 16.

again we have a hint, and yet more than a hint of a work accomplished for others: not the cross (for that is not in the line of this psalm, and involves the giving up in grace of what is seen to be proper to Him here) but that which in fact triumphed in the cross itself. For the priest's white linen robe was that in which he went in to God; and when He cried "with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him *out* of death, He was heard for His piety" (Heb. v. 7). By the power of His absolute perfection He rose necessarily from all that He endured, into His own sphere: and this was truly the greatest of victories, and is perfectly in the line of the psalm before us.

Accordingly the next verse reminds us of the cross itself, although the peculiar features of the cross are not in it. There is the call that was heard, but no forsaking: "He shall call on Me, and I will answer Him: I will be with Him in strait; I will deliver Him and honor Him:"—a perfect response to personal perfection; while the last verse, with its significant number, overlaps time and stretches through eternity. "With length of days will I satisfy Him, and show Him My salvation." Compare Ps. xxi. 4 for the interpretation: "He asked life of Thee,—Thou hast given it Him: length of days for ever and aye." It is the same Person before us in both psalms.

PSALM XCII.

We have now an out-burst of praise consequent upon this. It is not yet the full praise which we shall have before the book closes, and this for a very evident reason. Redemption and the work needed to accomplish this have not yet been seen with any sufficiency. The personal perfection of the Second Man could not of itself lift up the fallen creature. His own words in reference to this are plain, that "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (Jno. xii. 24). Union with Him is not in incarnation, but as risen from the dead; and only thus can God become the Sanctuary-refuge of fallen men.

Yet we have already had "Jehovah my refuge" from the lips of faith in the preceding psalm, and the present one is clearly sanctuary-praise. The means of accomplishment have not yet been brought out; but the One who accomplishes it has been before us: and as the poor man in Israel might bring his meat-offering for atonement, though "the blood that maketh atonement" was not found in it (Lev. v. 11–13), so we are permitted already to rejoice in the fruit of what has not itself become our possession. By and bye we shall be taken out of the ranks of the poor, and enriched with the wealth which has been already secured to us, and able to bring to God the full sin-offering and burnt-offering too. Meanwhile God's delight is in His Son; and as the Sabbath followed the manna in the wilderness (Ex. xvi.), so now already have we here a song. He is worthy; although the fullness of His glory has not yet been seen.

1. "Jehovah, the Most High," are titles which connect the present psalm with

(iii.) the instruments of praise.
(iv.) the experience.
(v.) the exercise.

Upon a [z]ten-stringed instrument and on the lyre,
with a solemn sound upon the harp.
For thou hast [y]made me glad with thy work, Jehovah:
I will sing for joy at the work of thy hands.
Jehovah, how [z]great are thy works!
thy [a]thoughts are very deep.

2 (6-10): The enemies.
(i.) without knowledge.
(ii.) spring up but to be destroyed.
(iii.) the Sanctuary-refuge.
(iv.) prostration of vain workers.
(v.) man with God.

A [b]brutish man knoweth not:
and a [c]fool doth not understand this.
When the wicked [d]spring as the grass,
and all the workers of vanity flourish,
[it is but] to be [e]destroyed for ever:
But thou art a [f]high place for ever, Jehovah.
For lo, thine enemies, Jehovah,—
for lo, thine [g]enemies shall perish:
all the workers of vanity shall be [h]scattered.
But my [i]horn shalt thou exalt like [the horn of] an aurochs:
I shall be [j]anointed with fresh oil.

3 (11-15): The portion of the saint.
(i.) his knowledge as to the right that shall be.
(ii.) the increase of the righteous.

And mine eye shall [k]see as to mine enemies:
mine ears shall hear as to the [l]evil-doers that rise against me.
The righteous shall [m]flourish like the palm-tree:
he shall grow like a [n]cedar on Lebanon.

x Ps. 144. 9.
y cf. Gen. 21 6. Ps. 126.1-3.
z Ps. 111.2,3.
a Is. 55. 8, 9. *cf.* Jer. 29. 11.
b Ps. 49. 20.
c Ps. 53. 1. Lk. 12. 20, 21.
d Job 21. 7-21. Lk. 16. 19-23. Ps.37.35,36.
e 2 Thess. 1. 9. Phil. 3. 19.
f cf. Is.57.15.
g Lk. 19. 27. Ps. 37. 20.
h Prov. 20. 26. Ps. 59. 11.
i Nu. 23. 22. Deu. 33. 17. Ps.89.17,24.
j Ps. 23. 5. Is.32.15-18. *cf.* Zech.4.6.
k Ps. 59. 10. *cf.* Is.66.23, 24.
l Ps. 27. 2.
m Ps. 1. 3. Is. 65. 22.
n Nu. 24. 6.

the last; and the latter we know as God's millennial name, when He shall be manifestly supreme over all the earth. The time is now in view, and in the next psalm comes: Jehovah reigns, and the earth is subject. Here already the soul celebrates Him in this way, and sees how "good" (or "right") it is to celebrate Him: His loving-kindness in the morning, His faithfulness in the nights. In opposite circumstances He is the same still; in darkness as in light His love works and declares itself.

The various instruments of praise are set in motion therefore: all that is responsive to man's hand is made to praise Him. We can discriminate little between them; for nothing but an antiquarian interest seems to attach to them in men's account. The experience of Jehovah's work has loosed also the tongue in praise; while His works as the expression of the deep thoughts of God, give abundant exercise to all man's faculties.

2. But there is conflict and opposition, as we well know: there are enemies to God among the creatures He has made. There are brutish men leveled with the animals below, who have shut themselves off from what none but themselves could deprive them of. They understand not even the lot of the wicked which is before their eyes, who spring up as the grass, but to be destroyed; while Jehovah remains the "high place" of His people for ever. To faith it is simple that Jehovah's enemies must perish; and the workers of vanity incur the doom of vanity. "But my horn," says the psalmist, "shalt Thou exalt like the horn of an aurochs:" the power conferred being not merely what men count that, but the power of the Spirit: "I shall be anointed with fresh oil."

3. Finally, the portion of the saint is given in the last five verses. First, as to his enemies, he will see surely that which comes for them. It is not needful to say what, it is so evident. The common principles of right secure it: if God is, that which is right shall be.

On the other hand, the righteous shall flourish like the palm and grow as the cedar of Lebanon. The soil of their planting is the best surely for this: planted

(iii.) in Jehovah's house.
(iv.) no failure.
(v.) in divine government.

They that are planted in the [o]house of Jehovah
shall flourish in the courts of our God.
They shall still be vigorous in [p]old age:
they shall have sap and be green:
To declare that Jehovah is [q]upright:
he is my [r]rock, and there is no perversity in him.

[o] Ps. 52. 8. Hos. 14. 5-8.
[p] *cf.* Ps. 71. 18 with Is. 65. 20-23.
[q] Is. 11. 4, 5.
[r] Ps. 18. 2.

Ps. xciii.

[s]PSALM XCIII.

The creature in the creature place.

1 (1, 2): Jehovah reigns.
(i.) in power in which the world too abides.
(ii.) the throne established.

JEHOVAH [t]reigneth:
he is clothed with [t]majesty:
Jehovah is clothed, he hath [u]girded himself with strength;
the world also is [v]established, that it shall not be moved.
Thy [w]throne is established of old:
thou art from [x]eternity.

[s] Ps. 97. 1. Ps. 99. 1. Is. 24. 23. Mi. 4. 7.
[t] Ps. 104. 1. Hab. 3.3-7.
[u] Ps. 65. 6. *cf.* Is. 62. 8.
[v] Ps. 96. 10. *cf.* Jer. 33. 20-22. *cf.* Hos. 2. 21, 22.
[w] Ps. 45. 6. Rev. 4. 2, 3.
[x] Ps. 90. 2. *cf.* Mi. 5. 2.

2 (3-5): Confirmed by opposition.
(i.) rebellion.
(ii.) the contrast.

The [y]floods have lifted up, Jehovah,—
the floods have lifted up their voice:
the floods lift up their [z]breakers.
Than the sound of many waters, the mighty breakers of the sea,
[a]mightier is Jehovah on high.

[y] *cf.* Ps. 2.1-3 with Dan. 7. 2, etc.
[z] *cf.* Rev. 19. 19, 20.
[a] Ps. 89. 9. *cf.* Ps. 76. 10 with Acts 4. 25-28.

(iii.) the holiness of Jehovah's house.

Thy [b]testimonies are very sure:
[c]holiness becometh thy house, Jehovah,
to length of days.

[b] Ps. 19. 7.
[c] *cf.* Ezek. 44. 4, etc. *cf.* Rev. 21. 27.

in the house of Jehovah, they flourish in the courts of God Himself. And here we are made to remember that "in Him we live and move and have our being"; for their vigor abides in old age; they have sap and are green. All this is to declare, blessed be God, that Jah, to whom they have been brought back, is *upright*:—we see how He has pledged Himself to His people; "He is my Rock, and there is no perversity with Him."

Psalm XCIII.

And now in a short psalm of five verses we are made to see the kingdom of the Lord on earth: which is only to say, the creature in its place as such. Then God will be in His: of course, reigning.

Then there will be seen the majesty with which He clothes Himself,—the might which would be but destruction for those away from Him. Now it is only stability for everything, and the world is established, so that it cannot be moved. Yet it is the Throne established of old: nothing new, in that sense. Men have been blind to it, and now it is revealed.

2. There has been opposition: strange strife has been permitted: the floods have lifted up not merely their voice, but their dashing waves, against the Rock of Ages. No details of the strife are needful: one has only to compare the parties in it: "Jehovah is mightier than the sound of many waters! than the mighty breakers of the sea!

What is the lesson of this strife? Only the lesson of God's holiness and truth. Holiness becomes then His dwelling-place,—the place of His rest,—for ever. So the first series of the psalms of this book ends.

Subd. 2.

The second subdivision of these psalms gives us the salvation of the earth, its redemption from the condition into which sin had brought it, or what the Lord

SUBDIVISION 2. (Ps. xciv–c.)

The Judgment-salvation of the Earth.

Ps. xciv.

[1] PSALM XCIV.

The appeal of righteousness to power.

1 (1, 2): The plea.
(i.) for righteousness.
(ii.) against evil.

GOD * of [d] vengeances, Jehovah,—
God * of vengeances, [e] shine forth!
Lift up thyself, thou [f] Judge of the earth!
render [g] recompense to the proud.

[d] Deu. 32. 35. 2 Sam. 22. 48. Jer. 5. 9.
[e] Ps. 80. 1. *cf.* 2 Thess. 1. 7–10.
[f] Ps. 50. 1–6. Is 33. 22.
[g] Is. 59. 16–19.

* El.

calls its "regeneration" (Matt. xix. 28). This in the human soul is when the kingdom of God is set up within it, and the dominion of sin is therefore taken away. And in these psalms we find correspondingly Jehovah's coming and reign over the earth. It is not, indeed, the final and perfect condition—the "new earth"; just as the regeneration of man is not his perfected condition: sin *exists*, though it does not *reign;* and not yet has the word been spoken, "Behold, I make all things new." Yet the groaning condition of the earth ceases at the "manifestation" in glory "of the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 19); and the kingdom itself is final: no other will supersede it ever.

This salvation is by judgment, therefore, the reign of the King and putting down of evil; and thus it is introduced here by the cry of the righteous, for whom judgment comes in. But this could not come, with any hope for man, until a new Man had been found with the secret of the Most High in His possession, and therefore able to claim and secure the blessing of God for Himself and for the earth as connected with Him. Atonement must indeed come in for this, but that is a secret at present as far as this book is concerned: the previous psalms have already declared it.

Here it is more the earth, though man, of course, is involved: and He is come who can say, if "the earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved, I bear up the pillars of it" (Ps. lxxv. 3). Thus He is in fact the new Adam, the Head of blessing for the world; and judgment, if it comes, shall not be for destruction, but for blessing and purification.

PSALM XCIV.

The introduction gives us, as already said, the cry of the righteous,—the appeal of righteousness to power. As the Lord says: "And shall not God avenge His own elect, who cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily" (Luke xviii. 7, 8). And in Revelation (viii. 3–5) the angel takes the censer from which the smoke of the incense has gone up to God with the prayers of the saints, and fills it with the fire of the altar, and casts it to the earth, and there follow thunders and voices and lightnings and an earthquake—the answering judgments of God upon their persecutors.

1. Such is the cry then here: "God of vengeances, Jehovah"—covenant God of Thy people, pledged to take up their cause—"God of vengeances, shine forth." The lightning-stroke is yet the revelation of the light: "Lift up Thyself, Thou Judge of the earth! render recompense to the proud."

Aye, it is pride which calls for abasement. "The day of Jehovah of hosts shall be upon all that is proud and lofty, and upon all that is lifted up; and it shall be brought low: and upon all the cedars of Lebanon that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan; and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up; and upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall. . . . And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day" (Isa. ii. 12–17).

2 (3-7): The opposition of evil.
(i.) the continuance of rebellion.
(ii.) their lips testify.
(iii.) Thy heritage!
(iv.) the weak!
(v.) Thy government!

3 (8-13): God as He manifestsHimself.
(i.) men without knowledge.
(ii.) testimony to His discernment.
(iii.) compassing round.
(iv.) vain imaginations.
(v.) government of one with God.
(vi.) till the end of evil.

Jehovah, [h]how long shall the wicked—
how long shall the wicked triumph?
They pour out—they speak [i]arrogance:
all the workers of vanity boast themselves.
They [j]crush thy people, Jehovah,
and afflict thy [k]heritage.
They slay the [l]widow and the stranger,
and murder the fatherless:
And they say, Jah [m]doth not see;
nor doth the God of Jacob discern.

Discern, ye [n]brutish among the people:
and ye fools, when will ye understand?
He that planted the [o]ear—shall he not hear?
he that formed the [p]eye, shall he not behold?
He that restraineth the nations, shall not he [q]correct?
he that teacheth man [r]knowledge?
Jehovah knoweth the [s]thoughts of man,
that they are vanity.
[t]Happy is the man whom thou restrainest, Jah,
and teachest him out of thy law:
To give him [u]quiet from days of evil,
till the [v]pit be digged for the wicked.

h Ps.74.9,10. Ps.35.19-21.
i Ps. 10. 3, 4. *cf.* 2 Pet. 2. 18.
j Is. 3. 15.
k Ps. 79. 1. Is. 63.17,18.
l Deu. 27.19. Is. 10. 1-4. *ctr.* Ps.72.4.
m Ps. 10. 8-11. Ps. 64. 5.
n Ps. 92. 6.
o Ex. 4. 11. Prov.20.12. *ctr.* Ps.115. 4-8.
p Ps. 10. 14. Ps. 11. 4.
q *cf.* Is. 11. 3, 4.
r *cf.* Is.26.9-11.
s 1 Cor.3.20. Jer.17.9,10.
t Ps. 118. 18. *cf.* Ps. 16.7.
u *cf.* Ps.37.7. *cf.* Is.30.15.
v Ps.9.15-17. *cf.* Ezek.28. 6-8.

Thus the cry here is in perfect accordance with the demands of holiness, and with the manner of the coming judgment. Pride is the very essence of sin, the creature lifted up out of its place and God dethroned from His; and for this the stroke must come. Here then is the prevailing plea.

2. The detailed catalogue of crime follows: continuous, and, as it would seem, triumphant rebellion; arrogant words pouring from their lips—boastings of utter vanity; Jehovah's people and inheritance the object of attack; the widow, stranger, fatherless, all that have no strength to resist. And the patience of Jehovah scoffingly insulted,—the God of this poor despised Jacob. Enmity to Him is at the bottom of it all, and the heart that seeks its own things without regard to others.

3. The psalmist turns to expostulate with them, though they be like brutes that possess no faculty for knowing God. Does not the formation of the ear testify to One who hears? of the eye, to One who beholds? And is there not a moral government of the world which manifests itself, such as the Teacher of all human knowledge must possess—the rod of the Master? Ah, Jehovah knoweth well the thoughts of men that they are vanity; and happy is the man who knows the restraint of His government, and the teaching of His law. Kept in quiet from the fear of evil, he waits for the sure end of the wicked.

4. This leads him to affirm the judgment of experience, in which the faithfulness of God, realized as to His own, assures the soul that the reign of evil shall not continue. "Judgment" that has slipped away from righteousness, as Moses' rod (the sign of authority) out of his hand became a serpent. But as, after all, he retained authority over it, so that when he put forth his hand to take it, it became again a rod in his hand, so judgment shall return again to righteousness; and all the upright in heart shall follow it: it shall be pursued in peace by these without the hindrance that now exists from the presence of evil.

Meanwhile the destitution of other help only shuts one up to God all the more. And the soul knows what help He has already given. Had it not been for this he would have already been dwelling in silence. But even when he

4 (14-19): The test of experience.
(i.) the faithfulness of God.
(ii.) shall be confirmed by judgment.
(iii.) shut up to God.
(iv.) the experience.
(v.) the weak with the strong.
(vi.) a limit.

5 (20-24): Exercise.
(i.) the Throne?
(ii.) hostile alliance.
(iii.) the refuge.
(iv.) the test.

For Jehovah will not [w]cast off his people,
nor forsake his heritage.
For [x]judgment shall return to righteousness,
and all the upright in heart shall follow it.
[y]Who will rise up for me against the evil doers?
who will take a stand for me against the workers of vanity?
Unless [z]Jehovah had been my help,
my soul had soon dwelt in silence.
When I said, my [a]foot hath slipped,
thy loving-kindness, Jehovah, sustained me.
In the [b]multitude of my anxieties within me
thy comforts soothe my soul.

Shall the [c]throne of wickedness * be co-partner with thee,
which frameth mischief according to [d]statute?
They [e]band together against the soul of the righteous,
and condemn the [f]innocent blood.
But Jehovah will be a high [g]tower for me,
and my God my [h]Rock of refuge.
And he will [i]return on them their iniquity,
he will [j]cut them off in their own evil:
Jehovah our God will cut them off.

* "Depths."

w *cf.* Rom. 11. 1, 2. *cf.* Jer. 31. 37.
x *cf.* Ps. 58. 1, 2 with Is. 1. 21-27. *cf.* Ezek. 21. 25-27.
y *cf.* Is. 59. 16-19. *cf.* Ezek. 22. 30.
z Ps. 124. *cf.* Ps. 118. 6-13.
a Ps. 38. 16. Mi. 7. 8.
b *cf.* Jer. 31. 18-26. *cf.* Is. 54. 11-17.
c *cf.* vers. 3-6. *cf.* Dan. 11. 36-39.
d *cf.* Rev. 13. 11-18. *cf.* Is. 10. 1.
e Ps. 10. 10. Ps. 2. 2.
f *cf.* Matt. 27. 1-5. *cf.* Ps. 82. 3-7.
g Ps. 9. 9, 10. Ps. 62. 2, 6.
h Ps. 18. 2.
i Ps. 7. 16. *cf.* Es. 7. 10.
j Prov. 11. 5.

had realized that his foothold was already gone, a Stronger than he, and with heart, not merely hand, supported him. Thus amid a multitude of anxieties within him, the comforts of God soothed—or, in the vivid imagery that he uses, "caressed"—his soul.

5. But this only gives him confidence the more to turn to Him as to the state of things which are still unanswered. He puts a question which seems bold to rashness, but it is only an appeal to righteousness which, amid all exercise, he knows full well to be in Him who is Supreme. Can He go on as if in partnership with a throne of iniquity which makes wickedness into law? The dread figure of the "Lawless one" is evidently before us here, and makes one realize what energy could be thrown into such questions. "They band together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood."

But he comforts himself in God: "Jehovah will be a high tower for me, and my God my Rock of refuge." And the end is that which will test where God is. "He will return upon them their iniquity; He will cut them off: Jehovah our God will cut them off."

Psalm XCV.

The ninety-fifth psalm gives us now the testimony, not yet actually of the Lord coming, but of the need of the obedience to Him, if Israel is to have the security of His care. While at the same time He is celebrated as the God of the whole earth, to whom everything is subject. It is thus, practically, (though neither so wide in its address, nor so definite in its announcement,) the message of the "everlasting gospel" in Rev. xiv.: "Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made the heaven and the earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." That the hour of His judgment is *come* is not in fact declared: but the next psalm declares it, and for this the present one prepares the way. Israel, however, is alone in view here: the invitation and the warning are distinctly addressed to them.

1. The psalm opens with the exhortation to sing to Jehovah as the Rock of

Ps. xcv.

1 (1–5): Jehovah our Creator-God.
(i.) the Rock.
(ii.) answer with confession.
(iii.) His glory.
(iv.) the whole earth His.
(v.) government (?)

2 (6–11): The alternative.
(i.) obedience.
(ii.) conditioning relationship.
(iii.) remember!
(iv.) the testing.
(v.) man with God.
(vi.) the limit of patience.

[2]PSALM XCV.

The two-fold testimony of judgment and salvation.

COME, let us [k]sing unto Jehovah;
let us make a joyous sound to the [l]rock of our salvation.
Let us come before his presence with [m]thanksgiving:
let us make a joyous sound to him with psalms.
For Jehovah is a [n]great God,*
and a great King [o]above all gods.
In [p]his hand are the deep places of the earth,
and the heights of the hills are his.
The [q]sea is his, and he made it,
and his hands [r]formed the dry land.

Come, let us [s]worship and bow down:
let us kneel before Jehovah our [t]Maker.
For he is [u]our God:
and we are the people of his [v]pasture,
and the sheep of his hand:
[w]to-day, if ye will hear his voice!
[x]Harden not your heart, as at [y]Meribah,
in the day of [z]Massah, in the wilderness.
When your [a]fathers tempted me,
proved me, and saw my [b]work.
[c]Forty years was I grieved with [that] generation, and said:
it is a people that do [d]err in their heart,
and they have not known my [e]ways;
Wherefore I sware in mine anger,
that they should not [f]enter into my rest.

* *El.*

k Ps. 96. 1. Ps. 98. 1.
l Ps. 94. 22. Ps. 144. 1.
m Ps. 50. 14. *cf.* Is. 12.
n Ps. 96. 4. 2 Sam. 7. 22.
o Ps. 97. 9. Ps. 86. 8. Ps. 89. 6.
p Gen. 14. 19. Ps. 104. 5, 16–18.
q Ps. 104. 25, 26. *cf.* Ps. 93. 3, 4.
r Gen. 1. 9, 10.
s Ps. 66. 4. *cf.* Zeph. 2. 11. *cf.* Phil. 2. 10.
t Ps. 100. 3. Ps. 149. 2. *cf.* Rev. 14. 6, 7.
u Ps. 48. 14. Is. 25. 9.
v Ps. 79. 13. *cf.* Is. 40. 11. *cf.* Ezek. 34. 11–16.
w Heb. 3. 7–19. Heb. 4. 7–11. *cf.* 1 Cor. 6. 2.
x Deu. 10. 12–17. *cf.* Jer. 7. 22–28.
y Ex. 17. 7. Nu. 20. 13. Nu. 27. 14. Ps. 81. 7.
z Deu. 6. 16. Deu. 33. 8.
a Ps. 78. 8, 1. 8 *cf.* Acts 7. 51–53.

cf. Mal. 4. 5, 6. *b* De. 11. 2–8. *c* Nu. 14. 22–34; *cf.* Amos. 5. 25, 26. *d* Ex. 33. 3; Ex. 34. 9. *e cf.* Ps. 103. 7. *f* Nu. 14. 23; Nu. 32. 10–13; Ezek. 20. 15, 16; *cir.* Ezek. 20. 40–44.

their salvation, to answer with "confession," of what He is to them,—the word for "thanksgiving" being literally "confession." For Jehovah their God is a great God, and a great King over all that man would exalt to deity. The earth in its depths and heights is then claimed as His; and the sea and the dry land which He has formed. In these last two cases the idea of control seems prominent, and that as necessarily inferred in the fact of His making them.

2. Then they are exhorted again to do Him homage, and His loving relationship to them as their Shepherd is put before them as what may well incite them to this. But there is added as the necessary condition to the continuance of this, "to-day, if ye will hear His voice!"* Apart from such obedient hearing there could be no walking together, of those not agreed. Grace only fulfills—not sets aside—such conditions.

A sad page of their history is now brought before them, the time of their "strife" with God at Meribah, and "tempting" Him at Massah. And this was

*The Masoretic division of the verses is an apparent difficulty; but Delitzsch points out that the "if ye will hear His voice" cannot be really the condition of what follows in the next verse, but is the expression of desire for them. It may then be really the condition of what precedes,—that is, of the continuance of it. And this seems to suit well with the character of the psalm as a whole. The use of the passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews is not against this, the quotation being from the Septuagint, and the division of the subject no way affecting the purpose of the apostle.

Ps. xcvi.

1 (1-3): Jehovah!
(i.) a new song.
(ii.) publish His salvation.
(iii.) glorious in wonders.

2 (4-6): The controversy with idolatry.
(i.) supreme.
(ii.) the contrast.
(iii.) glorious in the sanctuary.

3 (7-10): The glory due.
(i.) ascribe might.
(ii.) serve Him.
(iii.) worship in holiness.

[3]PSALM XCVI.

Jehovah manifested.

SING untc Jehovah a [g]new song:
sing unto Jehovah, [h]all the earth.
Sing unto Jehovah, bless his Name:
[i]publish his salvation from day to day.
Declare his [j]glory among the nations,
his wondrous works among all the peoples.

For Jehovah is [k]great, and greatly to be praised:
he is to be feared above all gods.
For all the gods of the peoples are [l]idols,
but Jehovah made the heavens.
Honor and [m]majesty are before him:
[n]strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

[o]Give unto Jehovah, ye families of the peoples,
give unto Jehovah glory and strength.
Give unto Jehovah the glory of his Name:
bring an offering, and come into his [p]courts.
Worship Jehovah in the majesty of [q]holiness:
[r]tremble before him, all the earth.

g Ps. 98. 1. *cf.* Deu. 31. 30. Deu. 32. 1, etc.
h *cf.* Ps. 22. 27. Ps. 67. 7.
i 1 Chron. 16. 23-33. Is. 60. 6.
j *cf.* Is. 66. 19. *cf.* Mal. 1. 11.
k Ps. 95. 3. Ex. 15. 11.
l Ps. 115. 4-8. Ps. 97. 7. Jer. 10. 3-12.
m Hab. 3. 3-11.
n 1 Chron. 29. 11, 12.
o Ps. 29. 1, 2.
p Ps. 100. 4. Is. 26. 1-4.
q *cf.* 2 Chr. 20. 21. *cf.* Zech. 9. 16, 17.
r Ps. 99. 1. Hab. 3. 6.

but a sample of forty years in which He was grieved by a generation finally cut off in the wilderness for unbelief. They are exhorted not to harden their hearts as did their fathers, when they tempted and proved God, and saw His work,—found Him alike faithful in His promises and in His threatenings. And now the rest of God is so near at hand, and in proportion to the blessedness of all implied in it, is the awful irremediable ruin of being cut off from it.

Psalm XCVI.

1. In the next psalm Jehovah is come, and the announcement of it is made, that all the earth may greet and give Him welcome. There is indeed a new song now to sing: for the long estrangement is over, the time when God has to be sought after, even by those nearest Him, and the world may go on in ignorance and unbelief of His existence even. Now He comes to fill the earth with the knowledge of His glory. He comes to bless and save it: to judge it indeed, and that is its salvation,—to purge it from the evil that defiles it, and deliver it from the bondage of corruption, and bring it into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God (Rom. viii. 21). Jehovah, the living, the eternal God comes to impart to it the blessing that must flow out where He is. "Bless," then, "His Name; publish His salvation from day to day! Declare His glory among the nations, His wondrous works among all the peoples."

2. God has not arbitrarily hid Himself. It is men who have turned away from Him. "When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful." Thus "they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened: professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts, and creeping things" (Rom. i. 21-23). This controversy with idolatry is now coming to an end. The sun arises, and the unclean things of the night are banished: "Jehovah is to be feared above all gods." Truly: for what are they? "all the gods of the peoples are idols"—or as the word means, "nothings" (compare 1 Cor. viii. 4)—"but Jehovah made the heavens." Such is He who has now come down to an earthly sanctuary, to reveal His heavenly glory upon earth: "honor and glory are before Him; strength and beauty are in His sanctuary."

(iv.) the world subject.

Say among the nations that Jehovah [s]reigneth:
the world also is established that it should not be moved:
he shall [t]judge the peoples with equity.

4 (11-13): Nature.
(i.) in harmony;
(ii.) with its increase.
(iii.) before Jehovah come.

Let the heavens [u]rejoice, and let the earth be glad:
let the [v]sea roar, and the fulness thereof.
Let the [w]field exult and all that is therein:
then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice
Before Jehovah:
for he is [x]come, for he is come to judge the earth:
he shall judge the world in righteousness,
and the peoples in his faithfulness.

Ps. xcvii.

[y]PSALM XCVII.

The earth subject.

1 (1-5): Jehovah supreme.
(i.) He reigns.
(ii.) in the midst of opposition.

JEHOVAH [y]reigneth, let the earth exult:
let the multitude of [z]isles rejoice.
Clouds and [a]darkness are round about him;
[b]righteousness and judgment the foundation of his throne.

(iii.) manifested in judgment.
(iv.) the earth prostrate.
(v.) the creature with God.

A [c]fire goeth before him,
and burneth up his adversaries round about.
His lightnings [d]lightened the world:
the earth saw, and [e]trembled.
The hills [f]melted like wax at the presence of Jehovah,—
at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.

s Ps. 99. 1. Is. 24. 23. Mi. 4. 7.
t *cf.* Ps. 110. 6. ver. 13.
u Is. 44. 23. Is. 49. 13. *cf.* Rev. 18. 20.
v Ps. 98. 7-9.
w Is. 35. 1, 2. Is. 55. 12, 13.
x Ps. 98. 9. Ps. 50. 3. *cf.* Zech. 14. 4, 5.
y Ps. 99. 1. *cf.* Is. 32. 1. *cf.* Jer. 23. 5.
z Is. 42. 4, 10-12. Is. 60. 9. Zeph. 2. 11.
a 1 Ki. 8. 12. Ps. 18. 11. *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 16.
b Ps. 89. 14. *cf.* Is. 6. 1. *ctr.* Ps. 94. 20.
c *cf.* Lev. 10. 2. *cf.* Num. 16. 35. Is. 66. 15, 16.
d Ps. 77. 18. *cf.* Lu. 17. 24.
e Ps. 114. 7.
f Is. 64. 1, 2. Mi. 1. 3, 4.

3. To this therefore all are now invited: all the families of the peoples are exhorted to give Him the glory due, the glory of His Name, to come before Him with an offering in token of homage, and worship Him in the majesty of holiness.

For Jehovah reigns: He judges the peoples with equity; and that stable and righteous throne is the stability of the world.

4. Nature therefore is called to rejoice in harmony: a song which begun in heaven is taken up on earth, and the sea too lifts up its waves in gladness, not rebellion. The field too is to exult, and the trees of the wood, for the curse of barrenness is lifted off. Jehovah is come, and come to judge the earth: the seal of its perpetuity of blessing emphasized once again to be in evil banished.

Psalm XCVII.

1. This is taken up, too, and expanded in the psalm that follows. Jehovah's supremacy is celebrated; the earth is subject to Him. The joy of His presence does not prevent the recognition of the fact that "clouds and darkness are round about Him"; and *just because* "righteousness and judgment are the foundation of His throne." He finds therefore upon earth opposition to be subdued, and He subdues it: "a fire goeth before Him, and subdueth His enemies round about." The earth trembles at His lightnings, which yet truly lighten the world: for the sharp flash of judgment is (though in anger) the revelation of Himself. The hills melt, and all that is high and lifted up is humbled and brought low in His presence.

2. Idolatry gives way before Him whom the heavens reveal in righteousness; a known God causes all the worshipers of idols to be ashamed. The powers that they have exalted to deities are found all paying homage to the true God: while Zion hears and the daughters of Judah exult, because of His judgments. Jehovah is Most High over all the earth, and exalted far above all gods.

2 (6-9): The idols set aside.
(i.) a known God.
(ii.) the confusion of idols.
(iii.) the satisfaction of His people.
(iv.) subjection of all.

The heavens [g] declare his righteousness,
and all the peoples see his glory.
Ashamed are all they that [h] serve graven images,
that boast themselves of idols:
all the [i] gods worship him.
Zion heard and was [j] glad,
and the daughters of Judah exulted,
because of thy [k] judgments, Jehovah.
For thou, Jehovah, art Most High above all the earth:
thou art [l] exalted far above all gods.

3 (10-12): His holiness.
(i.) faithful to the godly.
(ii.) blessing increasing spite of opposition.
(iii.) the praise it wakes.

Ye that love Jehovah, [m] hate evil:
he [n] preserveth the souls of his godly ones;
he [o] delivereth them from the hands of the wicked.
Light is [p] sown for the righteous,
and [q] gladness for the upright in heart.
[r] Rejoice, ye righteous, in Jehovah,
and give thanks at the [s] remembrance of his holiness.

g Ps. 50. 6.
h Deu. 27. 15. Is. 44. 9-20.
i Heb. 1. 6. *cf.* Eph. 1. 21.
j Ps. 14. 7. *cf.* Jer. 31. 11-14.
k Is. 26. 8, 9. Ps. 149. 5-9.
l Ps. 95. 3.
m Ps. 101. 3. Ps. 139. 21, 22.
n Ps. 116. 6.
o Ps. 37. 39, 40.
p Ps. 126. 5, 6. Ps. 118. 27.
q Is. 54. 1-5. Zeph. 3. 14, 15.
r Ps. 33. 1. Is. 12.
s Ps. 30. 4. Is. 52. 9, 10.

[5] PSALM XCVIII.

God with man.

A psalm.

Ps. xcviii.

1 (1-3): The new song.
(i.) acts of power.

SING unto Jehovah a [t] new song:
for he hath done [u] wonderful things:
his right hand and his holy arm have wrought [v] salvation for him.

t Ps. 33. 3. Ps. 96. 1. Ps. 149. 1. *cf.* Rev. 5. 9.
u Ps. 136. 4. *cf.* Is. 49. 18-23.
v *cf.* Ex. 15. 1, 6. Is. 59. 16-19. Is. 63. 5.

3. The third section exhorts in view of His holiness. The love of Jehovah means, if it be real, opposition to evil; and to such, as manifest this, His godly ones, He is faithful, preserving and delivering them from the hands of the wicked. For the righteous light is *sown*, and though it may for a time be obscured, it will finally increase and produce a harvest. A strange figure it may seem, and yet an intelligible one: for "the path of the just is as the shining light,"—or "the light of dawn,"—"which shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. iv. 18). How impossible to stop the steady advance of the morning light! And the real "day," when it comes, what shall it not bring with it in abundant recompense! the Light itself, what glories will it not disclose! "The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting Light, and thy God thy glory! Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting Light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended" (Isa. lx. 19, 20).

How blessed is the grace, which can enable redeemed sinners to "rejoice in Jehovah, and give thanks," not merely "at the remembrance of His" grace, but of His "holiness"!

PSALM XCVIII.

The ninety-eighth psalm, like the ninety-sixth, calls for the new song; and the close of it is also very similar. But the salvation He has wrought, and His remembrance of His people Israel are here before us, and the praise exhorted to is correspondingly more distinctly from (though not confined to) Israel themselves. The same thing is true of the next psalm, as compared with the ninety-seventh, though not so fully; and the verses of the present two psalms are nine each, as those of the former two are thirteen. This is not accident, although its meaning may not be clear to us.

1. The new song itself—the material of it—is, in the first section. Jehovah has done wonderful things,—deeds of power by which He has wrought salvation. This has spoken for Him among the nations, and manifested His righteousness:

(ii.) their testimony.

(iii.) He hath remembered Israel.

Jehovah hath made known his salvation:
his righteousness hath he [w]openly showed in the sight of the nations.
He hath [x]remembered his loving-kindness and his faithfulness toward the house of Israel:
all the [y]ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

[w] Ps. 126. 1-3. Is. 40. 5. Is. 56. 1.
[x] Is. 54. 7, 8. *cf.* Jer. 14. 19-21.
[y] Is. 49. 1-6. Mi. 4. 1-4.

2 (4-6): In response from the redeemed people.

(i.) the people as a whole.

Shout aloud unto Jehovah, all the land:
break forth, and [z]sing for joy, and psalm!
[a]Psalm unto Jehovah with the harp:
with the harp and the voice of a psalm.

[z] Is. 54. 1. Ps. 100. 1.
[a] Ps. 150. 3-6.

(ii.) the Levite ministry.

(iii.) the priests before Jehovah.

With trumpets and sound of cornet
make a joyful noise before the [b]King, Jehovah.

[b] Ps. 95. 3. Is. 43. 15.

3 (7-9): The full praise.

(i.) the full concord.

Let the [c]sea roar, and the fulness thereof:
the world and the dwellers therein.
Let the rivers clap [their] hands:

[c] Ps. 96. 11-13.

(ii.) ministries.

let the [d]hills sing for joy together

[d] Ps. 72. 3. Is. 55. 12.

(iii.) before Jehovah.

Before Jehovah:
[e]for he is come to judge the earth:
he shall judge the world in righteousness,
and the peoples in equity.

[e] Is. 64. 1. *cf.* Matt. 25. 31.

He has remembered His loving-kindness and truth toward the house of Israel, and the ends of the earth have seen His salvation.

2. The praise for this is heard in widening circles. In this section Israel is in view; in the next, the world and all the dwellers in it. Yet in the three verses here, the order is reversed, and begins with the people of the whole land; then the Levite chorus; and then, as indicated by the trumpets and the presence of the divine King, the priestly innermost circle. Jehovah is their King, and the accompaniment is heard with Israel's praise.

3. The full praise joins together the sea and the stable land; then the ministries of blessing, for which the rivers and the hills, their sources, seem both to stand. The rivers are manifestly this, the types of refreshment, which the hills distribute. One cannot help thinking of the waters flowing from the temple-throne in the Jerusalem to be on earth: the type of those in the New Jerusalem above; the "hills" speaking elsewhere also of authorities, and as ministering blessing thus (in psalm lxxii. 3). The last verse reminds us once more of that supreme rule in righteousness which is the great ministry, and from which the other ministries derive their being. All these, like the cherubim of the throne, celebrate Him from whom they have their origin, and proclaim His goodness who has come once more into a world which is His own. Man is with God, and in fullness of blessing.

PSALM XCIX.

The victory over evil requires more development. It is this that the sixth psalm of the series, in accordance with the numerical significance, now takes up. Salvation by judgment necessarily involves it; but we see this worked out here both in regard to the world at large, and to the saints also. Thus the apostle applies it to the latter: "for the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God;" and in this way "the righteous are with difficulty saved" (1 Pet. iv. 17, 18)—not "scarcely:" but God having to be at such pains with them to bring them through, so as both to His creatures at large, and for their own sakes also, to justify His holy government.

1. The first section, therefore, speaks of this government as now manifested,

Ps. xcix.

1 (1-3): Jehovah's reign.
(i.) His throne.
(ii.) extension.
(iii.) the praise of His holy Name.

2 (4-6): Loving judgment.
(i.),might and right.
(ii.) serve Him.
(iii.) His worshipers.

[6] PSALM XCIX.

Victory over evil.

JEHOVAH [f]reigneth: let the peoples tremble;
he sitteth [above] the [g]cherubim: let the earth be moved.
Jehovah is [h]great in Zion:
and he is [i]exalted above all the peoples.
Let them [j]praise thy great and terrible Name:
it is holy.

And the king's strength [k]loveth judgment:
thou hast established equity;
thou hast [l]executed judgment and righteousness in Jacob.
Exalt Jehovah our God, and worship at his footstool:
[m]holy is he.
Moses and Aaron were among his [n]priests,
and Samuel among those that [o]call upon his name:
they [p]called upon Jehovah, and he answered them.

f Ps. 97. 1. Jer. 10. 6,7.
g Ex. 25. 22. *cf.* Ezek. 1. 4-28.
h Joel 3. 16, 17.
i Ps. 97. 9. Ps. 47. 9.
j *cf.* Deu. 28. 58. *cf.* Rev. 15. 4. Ps. 113. 3. Mal. 1. 11.
k Ps. 45. 6,7.
l Ps. 72. 4. Ps. 103. 6.
m Is. 6. 3. Is. 40. 25,26.
n Ex. 6. 26, 27. Lev. 8. 2, etc. Lev. 9. 22-24.
o 1 Sam. 3. 7-10, 19-21.
p Ps. 81. 7.

Jehovah reigning, enthroned above the cherubim, as Ezekiel and the book of Revelation show Him. In the latter the "living creatures" in their various characters thus represent the features of His rule. The lion shows the fundamental necessity for all government—power. The ox shows it however to be used in patient ministry, as true rule is. The "face of a man" speaks of intelligence that seeks to be known by men His creatures. And lastly, the "flying eagle" speaks of ways yet "too wonderful" for comprehension by them (Prov. xxx. 18, 19). These cherubic beings, with their sleepless vigilance and activity, proclaim the Thrice-holy who is still above them (Rev. iv. 8); and this is the Throne now established over the earth. Well may "the peoples tremble" before Him, and "the earth be moved."

But He reigns in Zion, which His grace has chosen as the place of His rest, the accessible metropolis of the whole earth. Let the peoples praise His great and terrible Name: for it is holy.

2. Might and right are wedded at last, in a despotic rule, from which yet none need shrink except the wicked. For "the king's strength loveth judgment"—a beautiful poetic phrase which strangely seems to perplex the commentators: "Thou hast established equity; Thou hast executed judgment and righteousness in Jacob."

Thus the world is saved and blest, and all are bidden to worship at the footstool of the Throne: Jehovah our God is holy.

The third verse here one might naturally take to belong to the closing section. Yet the structure is against it: for it is evidently a third and not a first, and its presence in the last section would derange all the numbers there. Moreover the connection is not so close as at first it seems. "In the pillar of cloud He spake to them," could not refer to Samuel; and the three together—Moses and Aaron and Samuel are cited here as practical examples of the worship to which the people now are called. Such were the men that drew nigh to Him, His priests: Samuel not officially that, but practically standing in that place, when the priests themselves had departed from Him, and known characteristically as one that called upon His Name. These all, He in His faithfulness had answered, drawing near to those that drew near to Him.

3. But with all His people sanctification was the object that He steadily pursued. "In the pillar of cloud He spake to them"—that pillar which as the sign of His Presence, moved with them all the way from Egypt to the land:

3 (7-9): The sanctification of His people.
(i.) the obedience rendered.
(ii.) His answer in love and judgment.
(iii.) worship.

In the [q]pillar of cloud he spake unto them:
they [r]kept his testimonies, and the statute he gave unto them.
Jehovah our God, thou [s]answeredst them:
a [t]forgiving God * thou wast unto them,
even while taking [u]vengeance on their doings.
[v]Exalt Jehovah our God;
and worship at his holy hill:
for Jehovah our God is holy.

Ps. c.

[7]PSALM C.

The Final Praise.

A psalm of [w]thanksgiving.

(i.) Jehovah! with one accord.
(ii.) serve Him with joy.
(iii.) God manifest: to Him we belong.
(iv.) the ways resultant.

[w]SHOUT aloud unto Jehovah:
[z]all the earth!
Serve Jehovah with [y]gladness:
come before him with a song.
Know that Jehovah, he is God:
it is he that [z]made us and not we ourselves,—
[we] his people and the [a]sheep of his pasture.
Come into his gates with [b]thanksgiving,
into his courts with praise:
give thanks unto him; [c]bless his name.

q Ex. 13.21, 22. Ex. 33. 9.
r Heb. 3. 2, 5.
s *cf.* Ex. 17. 11, 12.
t *cf.* Nu. 14. 17-23. Ps. 85. 1, 2.
u *cf.* Ex. 32. 32-35. *cf.* Amos 3. 1, 2. *cf.* Heb. 12. 7.
v ver. 5. Is. 25. 1.
w *cf.* Jer. 30. 18, 19. *cf.* Jer. 33. 7-16.
x Ps. 98. 4. *cf.* Ps. 22. 27.
y *cf.* Is. 35. 10. *cf.* Num. 10. 10.
z Ps. 95. 6. *cf.* Is. 43. 1.
a Ps. 95. 7. *cf.* Is. 40. 11.
b Ps. 66. 13-15. Is. 60. 18.
c Ps. 103. 1.

* *El.*

thus grace had sought them, and obedience followed: "they kept His testimonies, and the statute He gave unto them."

His holiness was as fully displayed as His love; and His love was not less, that it was *holy*: "Jehovah our God, Thou answeredst them: a forgiving God Thou wast to them, even while taking vengeance on their doings."

Upon *them* it was not wrath, but chastening love—grace that showed itself in this that declared His wrath upon the *evil*, to make *them* "partakers of His holiness" (Heb. xii. 10). *Thus* does "grace reign" in holiness as well as righteousness; the very "vengeance" only showing the forgiveness to be really that, and not indifference; and that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord" (ver. 14). Blessed, salutary lessons, worthy of God to give!

Praise, therefore, is what ends the psalm: "Exalt Jehovah our God; and worship at His holy hill: for Jehovah our God is holy."

Psalm C.

The hundredth psalm closes this series with the full anthem of praise. Naught else remains. Perfection is found and rest; and both are in God. There is little need of interpretation. Jehovah is now to be in every mouth, not the superstitious dread of men afraid of uttering His Name, but shouting it aloud for very gladness: joyous service, with a song. Jehovah is indeed the manifest God, to whom belong His people: the creatures and the cared for of His hand. Strangely it may seem, but most beautifully, surely, the thankful approach of the worshiper falls into the fourth place, which speaks of the practical life. The *life* will now be praise (comp. Heb xiii. 15, 16). And the psalm ends with the record of *Jehovah's* ways, which are the theme of the praise itself: "for Jehovah is good: His loving-kindness is for ever; and His truth endureth from generation to generation."

Amen.

(v.) *His* ways.

For Jehovah is [d]good:
his [e]loving-kindness is for ever,
and his faithfulness [endureth] from [f]generation to generation.

[d] Ps. 86. 5. Ps. 119. 68.
[e] Ps. 103. 17. Mi. 7. 18-20.
[f] Ps. 89. 24, 33. Lam. 3. 22, 23. Mal. 3. 6.

SUBD. 3.

The third subdivision shows us now the salvation of the earth in its innermost reality; and here necessarily we return, therefore, to Christ, to see how truly its blessing is dependent upon this Second Man, and to find how deep and full it is as based upon His atoning work, and upon the glory of His Person in which Godhead and manhood are inseparably and eternally united together. The revelation of this mystery is given us in the hundred and second psalm, and in the most deeply instructive manner, as the answer of God to One humbled and cut off under the wrath of God upon sin, and which addresses Him—this humbled Man—as Creator and Lord of all. Dying, He is yet the Unchangeable, Jehovah Himself; and all things are in His hand. The claim that He has to the earth is thus every way perfect; and He is the One whom we have seen as Jehovah, taking possession of it. Thus the praise that flows out now is to Jehovah as Creator and Redeemer alike, the God of Israel, whose Presence with them has been the one glory of their history hitherto, and who has now shown Himself supreme in grace and power above all their sin.

These things we must not indeed expect to have told out to us in the clear language of the New Testament. We are dealing with prophetic scriptures which need for their very first rule of interpretation what Peter assures us applies to all prophecy, that they are none of them interpretable by themselves, but must be taken in communion with the whole mind of the Spirit, as given in the Word. Thus we must put these psalms together, just as we would put together the sentences of a book to find the full meaning, perhaps of any. And we must, above all, bring in the New Testament as the proper key to all deeper understanding of the Old. So read, however, there is to be gained a full and clear appreciation of the precious and pervasive meaning running through the whole, which gained is its own evidence. The spiritual picture, flooded with the warm light of heaven, no fortuitous running together of incoherent lines could possibly have achieved. And it is the picture of One well-known, who must have been present and well-known to the mind of Him who drew it with such perfect fidelity.

PSALM CI.

We have, first of all, the utterances of a King; and who if He be what His words convey to us, is such an One as the world yet waits for and must have for blessing: a strong hand of power which will not fail to accomplish its salvation, —power that will act in unswerving righteousness, and yet in tenderest consideration of frailty and of need: power with heart behind it; a "rod of iron," but in the hands of a Shepherd, the true Shepherd of the sheep: a rod that smites down evil, and yet only smites to save.

Prophet and priest and king make up One—the "Anointed": Messiah of Israel, and Gentile Christ alike. None of these can avail without the other. Prophet and priest have come, but not yet the full deliverance. Each has done his necessary work, and made ready the way for the King; but the King must come, that the full meaning of all may be apparent, and the end be reached. The Prophet must reveal, and bring in God as Light where all has been darkness, that God known may bring men's hearts back to Himself. The Priest must open the way to God, that they may in fact be able to draw near to Him. After all this, nothing remains but that power in the hand of the King should intervene, and put away in fact sin and its consequences from among men, and perfect blessing.

But for all this prophet, priest and king must be united in One who is Himself the bond which shall bind the universe together, God and man in one

SUBD. 3. (Ps. ci.–cvi.)

Salvation in its innermost realization.

Ps. ci.

[1]PSALM CI.

The King of righteousness.

A psalm of David.

1 (1-3): Personal righteousness.

(i.) in harmonious perfection.

(ii.) fellowship with God.

(iii.) holiness.

I WILL sing of [g]loving-kindness and of judgment:
unto thee, Jehovah, I will sing.
I will behave [h]wisely in a perfect way:
when wilt thou come unto me?
I will walk within my house in the [i]integrity of my heart.
I will [j]set no thing of Belial before mine eyes:
I [k]hate the work of them that turn aside:
it shall not cleave to me.

g Ps. 89. 1. *cf.* Is. 26. 9. *cf.* Is. 11. 1-5.
h Jer. 23. 5. Is. 52. 13.
i *cf.* 1 Ki. 9. 4. *cf.* Is. 11. 5.
j *cf.* Ps. 16. 8. *cf.* Jno. 14. 30.
k Ps. 97. 10. *cf.* Rev. 2. 15.

2 (4-8): Dealings with others.

(i.) Integrity of purpose.

(ii.) as to the evil.

(iii.) the dwellers in his house.

A perverse heart shall be far from me:
I will not [l]know an evil thing.
Whoso [m]backbiteth his neighbor, him will I destroy:
him that hath a [n]lofty look and a proud heart will I not suffer.
Mine eyes shall be on the [o]faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me:
he that walketh in a [p]perfect way, he shall serve me.

l *cf.* Jno. 8. 46.
m *cf.* Ps. 15. 3.
n Ps. 18. 27. *ctr.* Matt. 11. 29. *ctr.* Zech. 9. 9.
o *cf.* Ps. 16. 3.
p Ps. 84. 11. *ctr.* Amos 5. 10.

Person, who for man shall be God to reveal Him; who for God shall be Man to bring man nigh; who in the union of both shall combine absolute power with tender, sympathetic knowledge of man's need, and so be the true King after God's heart—for God and man, the David, the "Beloved."

1. The present psalm only begins to tell this tale, and in a way abrupt enough, if it did not suppose the ear of a disciple, already instructed by what has been said elsewhere. It is the utterance of David, and expresses the mind of a King of Israel, filled with zeal for that divine Throne which the throne in Israel represented. He is thus a worshiper, and "loving-kindness and judgment" are the theme of a "song." He sings to Jehovah, as one intimate with Him, inviting His coming to him, and with a confidence too great for one merely of the children of men, not only of the integrity of his heart, but of his practical wisdom for "a perfect way": in holiness which can permit no approach of evil. It is the voice surely of Him who with perfect lowliness and the keenest apprehension of evil in every form, could say in the presence of His enemies seeking how they might condemn Him, "Which of you convicteth Me of sin?"

"Loving-kindness and judgment" are with Him parts of but one song. Love and light,—grace and truth—are with Him as the two equal eyes which hold but one image. His heart "sings" of them—singing to Him in whom it finds them as their Source and Original. Here is One in whose hands power may be safely put: the prophetic picture of Him in whose hands it will in fact be put: to whom He has "given authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man."

2. We see Him now accordingly in the execution of this judgment. First of all, His principle and purpose to tolerate no evil; then the application of this to the back-biter, and to the proud who walks in his self-estimation apart from other men. But His eyes are upon the faithful in the land for good, and He draws them to Him, opening His house and heart, and gladly giving them places of confidence in which to serve a perfect Master in the way of the perfectness He loves.

(iv.) the practiser of deceit.

He that practiseth [q]deceit shall not dwell within my house:
he that speaketh falsehoods shall not be established before mine eyes.

[q] Ps. 52.1-5. Mi. 6. 12. *cf.* 2 Thess. 2. 9.

(v.) theocratic rule.

Morning by morning will I [r]destroy all the wicked of the land:
that I may [s]cut off all vain-doers from the city of Jehovah.

[r] Ps. 75. 10.

[s] *cf.* Is.66.19, 20.

Ps. cii.

[2]PSALM CII.

Christ in His humiliation, uniting God and man.

A prayer of the *t* afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and *u* poureth out his complaint before Jehovah.

[t] *cf.* Ps.22.24. *cf.* Ps. 41. 1.

[u] *cf.* Heb.5. 7, with Lk. 22. 41–46.

1 (1–7): The cause of the prayer. (i.) pleading with Jehovah. (ii.) for answer in strait.

JEHOVAH, [v]hear my prayer;
and let my cry come unto thee.
Hide not thy face from me in the [w]day of my strait:
incline thine ear to me;
in the day when I call, [x]hasten to answer me.

[v] Ps. 61.1, 2.

[w] *cf.* Lk.22. 53.

[x] Ps. 40. 13.

The vice of the weak, which is deceit, is not tolerated any more than that of the bolder or the stronger. Wickedness of all kinds must be rooted out of the land, and all vain-doers cut off from the city of Jehovah. Here is emphasized the spirit of the theocratic Ruler: the name of Jehovah must be hallowed in the place which He has chosen for Himself in grace among men.

Psalm CII.

Here then is a King after Jehovah's heart: such an one as the need of man craves but has not found. Yet has He long since come, and in the way marked out for Him from the beginning, all prophetic voices testifying to Him. They had testified also to His rejection at the hands of those long and carefully prepared for His reception, but who knew Him not. The crown they gave Him was a crown of thorns; they wrote His title in derision over a cross; little supposing that He would show His royalty by making that cross itself henceforth the very symbol of a power mightier than that of all the kings of the earth, and to outlast them all.

But in fact to be King after the fashion that alone He sought, He had to wear another title, and take another office, as we have seen; and this involved the very place to which in ignorance and unbelief they destined Him, but to which He freely—constrained only by His own love—stooped. As Priest He must have somewhat to offer; and, there being nothing that could avail beside, He offered up Himself. And thus too He became the Prophet of a new dispensation, and, lifting all this into a new sphere of glory, in Him Messiah's three-fold qualification was at last completed—Prophet, Priest, and King.

But who could be sufficient for these things? *Man* He must be to take man's penalty; man, to go in for man to God. We have seen One able to go in there—to whom the sanctuary was accessible; who knew "the secret place of the Most High," and could "abide under the shadow of the Almighty;" a Second Man, not involved in the ruin of the first, and for whom all the resources of divine power are available. But who then *is* this Second Man? This is the question which is answered by God Himself in the psalm before us, and answered to Him the rejected King of Israel, but under a heavier burden than this by far, and stricken by the hand of Him who owns Him now. But let us take up the psalm.

1. The first seven verses state in general terms the cause of the Sufferer's prayer. His plea is His distress. There is no confession of sin, as in the psalms of atonement generally, while on the other hand there is no profession of integ-

(iii.) the meaning.
(iv.) fading away.
(v.) exercise.
(vi.) under the mastering hand of God?
(vii.) complete desolation.

For my days are [y] consumed like smoke,
and my [z] bones are burned like a fire-brand.
My heart is smitten and [a] withered like grass,
so that I forget to [b] eat my bread.
Because of the voice of my [c] groaning
my bones [d] cleave to my flesh.
I am like a pelican of the [e] wilderness:
I am as an owl in ruined places.
I watch, and am like a [f] sparrow
alone upon the house-top.

2 (8–11): Against me!
(i.) man as in agreement with God.
(ii.) food that is not food.
(iii.) the inmost meaning.
(iv.) fading.

Mine enemies [g] reproach me all the day:
they that rave against me [h] curse by me.
For I have eaten [i] ashes like bread:
and mingled my drink with weeping;
Because of [j] thine indignation and thy wrath:
for thou hast lifted me up, and [k] cast me away.
My days are like a [l] shadow that is lengthened:
and I am [m] withered like grass.

3 (12–16): The resurrection of Zion.
(i.) steadfast, eternal.
(ii.) deliverance.
(iii.) the return of heart towards her.

But thou, Jehovah, [n] endurest for ever,
and thy remembrance is to all generations.
Thou shalt arise; thou shalt have [o] mercy upon Zion:
for the time to favor her—the [p] set time is come.
For thy [q] servants take pleasure in her stones,
and show favor to her dust.

y ver. 23. *cf.* Dan. 9. 26.
z Job 30.30. Lam. 1. 12, 13.
a ver. 11.
b *cf.* Jno.12. 27. *cf.* Matt.26. 38.
c *cf.* Ps. 6. 6.
d Ps. 22. 14, 15, 17. *cf.* Lam. 4. 7–9.
e Job 30. 29.
f *cf.* Ps. 69 20. *cf.* Matt.26. 56.
g *cf.* Ps.69.9-12. *cf.* Is.52.2,3.
h *cf.* Nu. 26. 10. *cf.* Ezek.14. 8 with Jer. 29. 22, 23.
i *cf.* Lam. 3. 16. *cf.* Ps. 80.5.
j *cf.* Ps.22.1. *cf.* Zech. 13. 7.
k *cf.* Ps. 51. 11. *cf.* Heb.13. 11, 12.
l *cf.* Ps. 109. 23.
m ver. 4.

cf. Is. 40. 6 with Phil. 2. 8. *n* *cf.* Ps.22.3; Ps. 90. 2. *o* Is. 14. 1, 2; Jer. 30. 10–22; *cf.* Zech. 10. 6. *p* Is. 40. 2; *cf.* Dan. 9. 24; *cf.* Lk. 21. 25–33. *q* *cf.* Ps. 122. 6–9; *cf.* Lam. 2. 1, etc. with Lam. 4. 22.

rity: it is as the prayer of one with whom there is no need. Yet He pleads that God's face should not be hidden from Him, and in the third verse seems already to intimate that which afterwards finds plainer expression—the wrath of God like a fire in His bones and His days consumed like smoke. In the sixth similarly the figures, as well as the number, would seem to speak of God's hand upon His circumstances, making Him like a bird of the deserts or of ruined places; while the desolation is yet heightened by the picture of the sparrow with its social instincts, in the place where these would naturally find gratification, yet watching alone.

2. The evil comes into clearer detail, however, in the second section, where we find pictured a woe so extreme that His enemies use it as a typical imprecation; as if God and they were in agreement—they could wish no one worse than God had done to Him! He had eaten ashes for food, and mixed His drink with tears. And now He speaks openly of God's indignation and wrath: if He had lifted Him up, it was but to cast Him away. Yet still there is no account given of this, no question of sin raised in any way. Reason there must be of course, but none is presented. Atonement is not intimated, and yet it is only in atonement that wrath could be upon the sinless One as here. But the fact alone is brought before us—Christ (as it surely is) in the depth of His humiliation, in the sorrow that had no equal, brought down now till the lengthening shadow of evening is the symbol of His days, and the withered grass His emblem.

3. But now the vision of the future passes before the eyes of the dying Man. He sees Jehovah, the unchanged, unchanging God, incapable of forgetfulness, and thinks of the promises which must surely be fulfilled, according to which not only Zion must be raised out of her ruin, but Jehovah Himself be manifested in His glory and the nations brought to fear His Name. He anticipates that mercy pledged to her, the set time come, as shown by the hearts of those in

(iv.) the earth-blessing waiting.
(v.) God with us.

And the [r]nations shall fear Jehovah's Name,
and all the [s]kings of the earth thy glory.
When Jehovah shall [t]build up Zion,
he shall [u]appear in his glory.

4 (17–22): God's way with the weak and failing.
(i.) grace.
(ii.) the after-witness.
(iii.) God from His sanctuary.
(iv.) regarding the creature.
(v.) man with God.
(vi.) the limit of disobedience.

He will [v]regard the prayer of the destitute,
and not despise their prayer.
This shall be written for the [w]generation to come,
and a people that shall be created shall praise Jah.
For he hath [x]looked down from the height of his sanctuary:
from the heavens Jehovah hath beheld the earth;
To hear the [y]groaning of the prisoner,
to set loose the children of death:
To [z]declare in Zion Jehovah's Name,
and his praise in Jerusalem;
When the [a]peoples are gathered together,
and the kingdoms to serve Jehovah.

5 (23–28): Immanuel.
(i.) My strength!
(ii.) the contrast.

He [b]weakened my strength in the way:
he [c]shortened my days.
I said, O my God,* [d]take me not away in the midst of my days:
[e]thy years are throughout all generations.

* El.

r Is. 60. 3–5. Is. 65. 1.
s Ps. 138. 4. Is. 49. 7.
t Is. 44. 23–26. *cf.* Ezek. 36. 10, 33.
u Ps. 50. 1, 3. *cf.* Mal. 3. 1–3. *cf.* Ezek. 43. 1–5. *cf.* Matt. 25. 31.
v *cf.* Ps. 22. 24.
w *cf.* Ps. 22. 30, 31. Ps. 78. 6, 7
x Is. 63. 15. Ps. 80. 14.
y Ps. 79. 11. Is. 49. 9. *cf.* Zech. 9. 12.
z *cf.* Jer. 51. 10.
a *cf.* Is. 2. 2–4.
b *cf.* 2 Cor. 13. 4.
c vers. 3, 11. *cf.* Is. 53. 8.
d *cf.* Matt. 26. 38, 39.
e ver. 12. Ps. 90. 2. *cf.* Mi. 5. 3.

sympathy with His heart turned towards her stones and to the very dust of her degradation. Already thus the streaks of dawn are visible for the earth; and soon "the nations shall fear Jehovah's Name, and all the kings of the earth Thy glory." For when He builds up Zion, then His glory shall appear.

4. This leads on to the consideration of those ways of His with the weak and failing, the self-ruined sons of men, exemplified so signally in His mercy to Israel. Man has fallen through pride and independence of heart. Therefore the need of his being humbled and brought into that state of destitution in which alone he will seek God. But then "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer." And this is not merely true in an isolated and exceptional instance: it is His way of grace, broad-written now in Israel's restoration, for a memorial to after-generations, that a people "created" for Himself may praise the Eternal. The strong word "created" is no doubt used here with a moral force which anticipates the doctrine of the New Testament. Nor are there any that really fill their place as the creation of God except as they are recipients, and so heralds of His grace.

God then has looked down from the height of His sanctuary; from the heavens Jehovah has beheld the earth: never with indifference, never with hostility, while abiding in the holiness of His nature, which separates Him, not from His creatures, but only from their sin: "to hear the groaning of the prisoner; to set loose the children of death"—those under its sentence. And in this misery was Zion, in which therefore His Name is now declared, and His praise in Jerusalem. And so the rebellion of the earth is ended: "the peoples are gathered together, and the kingdoms to serve Jehovah."

5. Is HE, then, an example of these ways of Jehovah—of His showing mercy to the poor? Nay, "He weakened my strength in the way: He shortened my days." Himself the King of Zion, "Messiah the Prince," He is "cut off, and has nothing" (Dan. ix. 26 *margin*). The sinless One, He is left to die; He upon whom depend all the promises is left to cry out to the Eternal Might, as one in the midst of his days taken away—smitten, and not supported!

(lii.) the manifestation.

(iv.) the frailty of the creature: where?

(v.) Immanuel.

(vi.) the triumph.

Of old hast thou [f]founded the earth,
and the [g]heavens are the work of thy hands.
They shall [h]perish, but *thou* shalt continue;
and they all shall grow old as a [i]garment:
as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed;
But thou art the [j]same,
and thy years shall have no end.
The children of thy servants shall [k]abide,
and their seed shall be established before thee.

f Heb.1.10–12. *cf.* Jno.1.3. *cf.*Col.1.16.
g *cf.* Ps. 8.3. *cf.* Prov. 8. 27, 28.
h Is. 34. 4. *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 10–13.
i Is. 51. 6.
j Lam.5.19. *cf.* Heb.13. 8.
k Ps. 69. 36. Is. 65. 22.

From Him who delighteth in mercy, for Him no mercy? And are these the equal ways of the Unchangeable? Why then no mercy? And if this is no exception to Jehovah's ways, can it be that HE is the exception? does He in fact not belong to the class of those to whom mercy could be shown? does He not violate the rule, because He does not come under it? That is what the answer of God declares: "Of old hast Thou founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. *They* shall perish, but *Thou* shalt continue; and they all shall grow old as doth a garment: as a vesture shalt Thou change them and they shall be changed; but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end."

The statement of the apostle (Heb. i. 10–12) is the direct authority for applying these words to Christ. Apart from this we might indeed imagine that they were but the pursuing of that affecting contrast between the transience of man and the immutability of God which we find in the earlier part of the psalm, and which seems to begin again in the preceding verse. But we have not for the first time here to realize the mystery-form in which some of the most glorious intimations in the Psalms are clothed. This is characteristic, moreover, of the whole of the Old Testament. And then the cry of the Speaker finds no response, and the perplexity in the psalm finds no unravelment. Yet one can see, if we merely take this for what it is not, a detached and isolated composition, that the Sufferer is One who, meeting the wrath of God with the profoundest faith in God, contrasts the fulfillment of the promises to Zion with His own brief days. Yet God "regards the prayer of the destitute, and does not despise their prayer." He could not mean to give the case of the Sufferer as an exception to this, or a problem without solution. His own condition has to do evidently with these promises to Zion with which it is interwoven, and the psalm ends in no hopeless spirit but with confidence and happiness.

The inspired application of these verses is at once an illumination of the whole psalm. They become at once the key to the whole, and throw their light beyond the psalm itself upon all that surrounds it in the book. We see the connection with the voice of the King which we have heard in the psalm preceding: we understand the connection with the fulfillment of the promises to Zion: for here too is the King! We look back, and without difficulty connect this again with the subject of the ninety-first, with Him whom in contrast with the failed and death-stricken sons of men in the psalm of Moses (xc) we may well call the Second Man. We find here One who has never lost His title to the earth as Adam did. Nature greets and smiles on Him; angels wait on Him; and in the next two psalms we have a "sabbath" and the world immovably established. Then Jehovah comes to take possession of the earth, and it is blessed indeed; but we miss the Head of blessing: where is the Second Man? The third section of the book opens with His voice. He is now the King of Israel, but His kingdom scarcely seems thus as world-wide as before. We pass on, and we find—what? The glorious King Himself and the Man whom earth and heaven join to honor,—the Deathless death-stricken, "numbering *His* days"! but where is the "wisdom" here? Then the answer bursts on us. It is a problem of which God Himself may well give us the solution. The death-stricken is yet the

Ps. ciii.

[s]PSALM CIII.

The praise of the restored people.

[A psalm] of David.

1 (1-2): Bless Jehovah!
(i.) with united heart.
(ii.) love answering love.

[t]BLESS Jehovah, my soul:
and [m]all that is within me, [bless] his holy Name.
Bless Jehovah, my soul:
and [n]forget not all his benefits.

2 (3-7): Saviour
(i.) altogether.
(ii.) redeeming from death.
(iii.) renewal of youth.
(iv.) for the oppressed.
(v.) governmental ways.

Who [o]forgiveth all thine iniquities:
who [p]healeth all thy diseases.
Who [q]redeemeth thy life from the pit:
who crowneth thee with [r]loving-kindness and tender mercies.
Who [s]satisfieth thy mouth with good:
thy youth is [t]renewed like the eagle.
Jehovah [u]executeth righteousness and judgment
for all that are oppressed.
He made known his [v]ways unto Moses,
his [w]doings to the children of Israel.

s Ps.104.1,35.
m cf. Ps. 35. 10.
cf. Ps. 45.1.
cf. Eph. 5. 19.
n Gen.40.23.
cf.2 Pet.1.9.
o Is.44.22,23.
cf.Col.2.13.
p Ex. 15.26.
cf. Matt. 8. 17.
cf.Ezek.47. 12.
q Ps. 56. 13.
cf. Lam. 3. 57, 58.
r Ps. 68. 19, 20.
cf. Is. 61. 3.
s cf.Deut.33. 23.
Jer. 31. 14.
t Is. 40. 31.
u Ps. 146. 7.
cf.Mal. 3.5.
v Ex. 33. 13, 18.
cf. Nu. 12. 6–8.
cf. Hos. 14. 9.
w cf.Ex. 14. 30, 31 with Ps. 106. 12, 13.

Deathless One; the King of Israel is a divine King; the Second Man, the Sabbath-maker for the world, is Jehovah who comes back to it: and creature and Creator are in Him for ever united; everlasting, *Human* arms hold us fast to God!

Of atonement itself we do indeed hear, directly, nothing; but we may well be trusted to discern (after all that has been before us) in this Death what has effected it. It is the necessary and only explanation of "indignation and wrath" met by this self-humbled, glorious One. And suited it is, after all, to what we know Him now to be. God, who is love, would be Himself our Redeemer. He has redeemed us to *Himself*. Blessed be His Name, it is Immanuel, for He has saved His people from their sins.

Thus we can understand the note of triumph with which the psalm ends: "the children of Thy servants shall abide, and their seed shall be established before Thee."

Psalm CIII.

1. There follows now the praise of the restored people. The psalmist calls upon his soul with all its powers to praise Jehovah, the eternal, unchangeable and covenant-God. Love manifesting itself in "all His benefits" awakes the soul to praise Him, while it realizes amid all its joy the weakness and inconstancy of the creature, of which in contrast with His faithfulness it has had such abundant proof: "forget not all His benefits."

2. Jehovah is celebrated, first of all, in the salvation which He has effected for them. He is Saviour altogether: of the whole man, body and soul alike. Israel's experience in the day contemplated will include in the fullest way that of bodily healing, such as accompanied the Lord's ministry in her midst, miracles which are called therefore in the epistle to the Hebrews "powers of the world to come" (chap. vi. 5),—more strictly, "of the coming age." The bodily condition will then be the fitting sign of the spiritual, in a world from which the curse upon the ground even will be removed.

Nationally and individually, their life is now redeemed from destruction, and more, they find, more completely than Abraham their father, a renewal of youth. "As the days of a tree shall be the days of My people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands" (Isa. lxv. 22).

3 (8-10): Himself.
(i.) His grace.
(ii.) not always contending.
(iii.) the manifestation.

4 (11-18): In view of creature weakness.
(i.) supreme in mercy.
(ii.) putting away sin.
(iii.) a father's heart.
(iv.) our weakness.
(v.) divine government.
(vi.) the limit of life.
(vii.) perfect loving-kindness.
(viii.) the new covenant.

Jehovah is [x]merciful and gracious:
[y]slow to anger and plenteous in loving-kindness.
He will not [z]perpetually contend,
nor will he keep in mind for ever.
He hath not dealt with us [a]after our sins,
nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

For as the heavens are [b]high above the earth,
so great is his loving-kindness unto them that [c]fear him.
As far as the east is from the west,
so far hath he [d]removed our revoltings from us.
As a [e]father hath tender mercy on [his] children,
so Jehovah hath tender mercy on them that fear him.
For he [f]knoweth our frame:
he remembereth that we are dust.
As for man his days are as [g]grass:
as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.
For the wind passeth over it, and it [h]is not:
and its place recognizeth it no more.
But Jehovah's loving-kindness is [i]from everlasting to everlasting on them that fear him:
and his righteousness unto [j]children's children:
To those that [k]keep his covenant,
and to those that remember his precepts to do them.

x Ex. 34. 6. Neh. 9. 17. Joel 2. 13.
y *cf.* Nah. 1. 3 with Ps. 76. 7.
z Is. 57. 16. Mi. 7. 18.
a *cf.* Ezr. 9. 13. Ps. 130. 3,4. *cf.* Is. 40. 1,2.
b Ps. 57. 10. Ps. 108. 4. Is. 55. 9.
c vers. 13,17. Ps. 34. 9.
d Jer. 50. 20. Is. 38. 17.
e *cf.* Hos. 11. 8, 9, *cf.* Lk. 15. 20.
f *cf.* Gen. 6. 3. Ps. 78. 39. Is. 2. 22.
g Is. 40. 6-8. Ps. 102. 11. Jas. 1. 10,11.
h Job. 14. 1, 2, 10.
i *cf.* Ps. 90. 2. Jer. 31. 3.
j *cf* Ex. 20. 5, 6. *cf.* Ezek. 37. 25. *cf.* Acts 2. 39.
k Deut. 7. 9. *cf.* Heb. 8. 7-13.

Then the oppressed find a Judge of unfailing righteousness: the character in which Israel's King is so often represented;—the tender assurance of how the pitiful eyes of the Almighty have been fastened upon human misery and wrong all the time that He endured it; as the prophet says with regard to Israel (Isa. lxiii. 9), "afflicted in all their affliction." Now has come the time of interference and of setting right—the revelation of the God in whom men have not believed.

Yet these are ways long since in fact declared: "He made known His ways unto Moses, His doings unto the children of Israel." The people saw what was outward; to him with whom God spake face to face, the inner principle was declared. Nor must we imagine that this was law merely. All Deuteronomy is witness of how far beyond this Israel's law-giver was made to see; and the final prophecy and song with which this closes, clearly declare the ruin of man under law, the sovereign goodness which comes in at last for him. Thus the song of Moses will be the fitting accompaniment of the song of the Lamb in the mouth of the victorious multitude who stand, in the day to come, by the crystal sea (Rev. xv. 3).

3. Now we have Jehovah Himself put before us: "merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in loving-kindness"; and this is how in fact He declared Himself to Moses (the cross-shadow of the law only being removed from it,) that "He can by no means clear the guilty" (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7). Nay, "He will not perpetually contend, nor will He keep in mind for ever." They have proved this now in their history, and can say, "He has not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us after our iniquities." Thus He has manifested Himself, and glorified Himself before their eyes.

4. They expand this, therefore, in the fourth section, in which His mercy in view of the frailty of the creature is dwelt upon, and in eight verses traced as far as the new covenant, in the blessings of which they are now rejoicing. Supreme is He in mercy: high as the heavens are above the earth. East is no

5 (19-22): God in His government.
(i.) universal rule.
(ii.) servants in fellowship.
(iii.) fulfilling His pleasure.
(iv.) His works.

Jehovah hath established his [l]throne in the heavens,
and his kingdom ruleth over all.
Bless Jehovah, ye his [m]angels:
ye that excel in [n]strength, doing his word:
[o]hearkening to the voice of his word.
Bless Jehovah, [p]all his hosts:
ye ministers of his that do his pleasure.
Bless Jehovah, all his [q]works in all places of his dominion:
bless Jehovah, O my [r]soul.

l Ps. 11. 4. Is. 66. 1.
m Ps. 148. 2. cf. Is. 6. 1-3. cf. Rev. 5. 11, 12.
n cf. Rev. 5. 2. cf. Rev. 18. 21.
o Heb. 1. 14.
p Josh. 5. 14. Ps. 68. 17.
q Ps. 145. 10.
r ver. 1.

farther from the west than He has removed their transgressions from them. Nay, as a father's tender mercy toward his children, such is His tender mercy toward those that fear Him. Then we are assured of the fount of infinite pity in Him who remembers that we are but dust; though under His government it is that man's days can find their image in the flower of the field, which, if the wind roughly passes over it, is gone for ever out of its place.

"But Jehovah's loving-kindness is from everlasting to everlasting upon those that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children: to those that keep His covenant, and to those that remember His precepts to do them." This should not sound legal: it is a principle that grace does not set aside,—which it would not *be* grace, in fact, to set aside. Grace affirms and fulfills it; for "sin shall not have dominion over you, *because* ye are not under law but under grace." And thus the "covenant" here cannot be either the covenant of law which only "worketh wrath," but must be that which as Abraham's covenant makes them true children of Abraham, and which was given four hundred and thirty years before the law came in. *Faith* links men with this covenant, whether Jew or Gentile, and those who keep it are the circumcised *in heart*.

So only can we understand the utterance here, and realize the joyous assurance that rings through it. The "*new* covenant" is but the re-statement more fully, and in more precise application to the nation of Israel, of the old "covenant of promise" which God gave to Abraham; and in this direction apparently the numerical finger points. The grace and blessing here are both eternal.

5. Nothing remains, therefore, but the eternal praise to Him whom all His ways become, and to join with all intelligences, all His hosts—the forces that with sun and moon and storm and earthquake, do still His pleasure—while all His works, all created things in all places of His dominion, bless Him. Yea, "bless Jehovah, O my soul."

Psalm CIV.

We are now in a position to realize as never before what creation is. Redemption is the key, and the only key, that will fully unlock its treasures; for redemption alone can remove the shadow which, after all, invests its brightest scenes, and lift the sadness which will intrude itself upon every contemplation of it. Nor only so: unbelieving suspicions find their lurking-places amid these shadows, and give bitterness to this sadness. Nature, pervaded by law, as the science of the day more and more assures us, seems cast in a rigid mould from which we shrink inevitably. The more perfect as a machine, the less we find heart in it; and the smiles with which it decks itself seem often but very cruelty and hypocrisy, as we realize it to be the monster that without remorse consumes day by day its own offspring. The more we grow in knowledge, the more impossible it seems to escape the conviction that this is no effect of moral ruin introduced by Adam into what was before a deathless paradise. Death seems wrought into the constitution of things from the beginning. We have in the geological strata a history of the earth stretching long ages back of Adam; and far down as we may pierce, nothing but convulsion and ruin can be discerned. We dwell upon the accumulated dust of multitudinous generations, which some-

Ps. civ.

1 (1-4): Jehovah the Creator.
(i.) His greatness.
(ii.) hiding yet declaring.
(iii.) display in the heavens.
(iv.) creature-subjection.

[t]PSALM CIV.

Nature's tribute to Jehovah.

[s]BLESS Jehovah, my soul:
Jehovah my God, thou art very [t]great:
thou art clothed with [u]honor and majesty:
Covering [thyself] with [v]light as with a garment;
[w]stretching out the heavens like a curtain;
Framing his upper [x]chambers in the waters;
making the [y]clouds his chariot;
going on the wings of the wind;
[z]Making his angels spirits,
his ministers a flaming fire.

s Ps. 103. 22.
t Ps. 48. 1. Jer. 10. 6. *cf.* Job 38. 4, etc.
u Ps. 93. 1. *cf.* Rev. 1. 13-15.
v *cf.* 1 Tim. 6. 16 with Col. 1. 12.
w *cf.* Ps. 19. 4, 5. Is. 40. 22.
x ver. 13. Amos 9. 6.
y Is. 19 1. Ps. 18. 10. *cf.* Acts 1. 9 with Rev.

1. 7. z Heb. 1. 7, 14; *cf.* Dan. 9. 27.

times constitute in fact the very substance of the strata themselves. Not merely individuals but countless types of form have passed away; and the "fittest" that "survive"—if they do survive—have been (according to the theory) produced at the cost of a prodigal waste of life on the part of the less perfect which have yielded them only temporarily the place which in a brief time they too must yield to others.

Is it possible then to have any more a "psalm of creation"? is it possible any more to sing with the understanding these songs of another age? Yes, surely, if we have learned, and not unless we have learned, redemption as the key to the mysteries of creation. If we realize God to be a Saviour, and can write Jehovah-Saviour in brief as "Jesus," we have a light bright enough to dispel all shadow from the soul and bathe it in eternal glory. A record of conflict and of ruin as connected with the creature will no more be strange or stumbling, but familiar truth; while the up-rise of a higher form of life out of what has perished and passed away will be but as a prophecy of a better resurrection and the final victory of God over the evil, the Son of God being glorified thereby.

1. Jehovah the Redeemer is what the last psalm has proclaimed to us. Divine Love could not give to another the glory of this salvation, nor find one capable of the stupendous sacrifice that it involved. In the psalm before us Jehovah is the Creator also, and Nature brings its tribute of praise to swell the anthem of redemption. Only thus can we realize its glorious harmony.

The psalm begins with celebrating the greatness of Jehovah: He is clothed with honor and majesty. Inaccessible in His own essential glory, He covers Himself with light as with a garment, and stretches out the heavens like the curtain (of a tent). The visible is thus the robe of the Invisible. He indwells it, and through it we may discern, if dimly, His glorious Form.

Yet this dimness itself is Light; and there is no hiding, save the better to make known; just as when, because of the feebleness of our sight, through a darkened glass we behold the sun. The tremulous curtain of the heavens stretched out is, as it were, interwoven with its iris-rays. In the waters of the expanse He frames His upper chambers; the dark clouds moving on the wings of the wind being the chariot in which He rides.

It is plain that the psalmist refuses mere matter and motion as a sufficient account of heavenly phenomena, and that to him all these are instinct with the Presence and Will of a Divine Being, whom they in some sense disclose. Nor has the discovery of some of the mechanics involved in them done one whit to disprove the psalmist's belief. Certainly the description given may be allowed to be poetical, but its meaning is not difficult to understand, nor can it be proved superstitious. Superstition thrives in the dark, is incongruous, fantastic, irrational. To claim as manifestations of Mind what has been proved to be so perfectly rational, or of a Divine Governor what is so plainly authoritative as to be owned as "law,"—this has no character of superstition at all. Divine action,

2 (5-9): The establishment of the earth and separation of the waters.
(i.) permanent foundations.
(ii.) the contrast.
(iii.) the resurrection of the earth.
(iv.) the subject waters.
(v.) government.

He laid the earth on its [a]foundations,
that it might not be moved for ever and aye.
Thou hadst covered it with the [b]deep as with a garment:
waters stood above the mountains.
At thy rebuke they [c]fled:
at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.
Mountains ascended; they went down the valleys
unto the place that thou hadst [d]appointed for them.
Thou hast set a bound that they shall not pass,
nor [e]return to cover the earth.

a Ps. 24. 2. *cf.* 2 Pet. 3. 5, 10, 13.
b Gen. 1. 2.
c Gen. 1. 9. Job. 26. 10. Prov. 8. 27-29.
d Job. 38. 8-11. Jer. 5. 22.
e Gen. 9. 11. *cf.* Rev. 21. 1.

identified with such phenomena, is God thus far in the light, and appealing to the rational nature of His creatures for recognition.

The acceptance and use of the Septuagint translation of the next verse by the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews (i. 7) would quite preclude the adoption of any other. "He maketh His angels spirits" is, according to the apostle, a fact affirmed of the nature of angels; and of course a much higher fact than "making the winds His messengers." As it might be translated either way, the meaning must be decided otherwise than by the language. Nor is it a disproportion in thought, that while the material instrument is contemplated as directly in the hands of God, the spiritual beings should be His messengers. This shows, on the one hand, that no part of His creation is to be conceived as separate from Him, no physical agency that is not the embodiment of His will, while, on the other hand, the "spirits" with a responsibility of their own represent Him and are subject to Him, receiving their character and endowment from Him, according to His will. There would be indeed a lack in the representation of Jehovah the Creator, were only physical forces—clouds, winds, etc—spoken of, and not His creative power in the domain of spirit.

2. The psalmist now recites the story of the preparation of the earth for man. Divine delight in man, and so His "rejoicing in the habitable parts of his earth" are evidently the theme, while the rebuke and bounding of the overflowing waters may be read as a parable of the strife of which the world has ever been the scene, and which receives its final rebuke when the Prince of peace shall come. The first verse declares the absolute security of the dry land for ever, in the strongest expression for eternity that the Old Testament knows (*le-olam va-ed*). The deluge (of which we are beginning to have some knowledge geologically*) altered nothing essentially as to the structure of the earth in this way; and the purification by fire which awaits it before the eternal condition of the "new earth" can be reached, need not do so either; although there will then be "no more sea" (Rev. xxi. 1). Whatever may be the changes, God adheres to His first plan all through, and builds for eternity.

But at first, as we read in Genesis, the reign of water had been universal: "Thou hadst covered it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains." Geology knows well this condition; which Moses somehow knew before geology. The earth man lives upon, like man from the womb, was born out of water; and the structure of the earth was there—"mountains," and by implication valleys—before it was thus born.

The third verse implies (what the number seems to indicate) the resurrection of the earth; but the psalmist speaks of the rebuke of the waters; which I suppose is continued in the following verse. It is objected that we cannot say, "They ascended the mountains," which (while in itself unnatural) is forbidden by the fact that they already stood above them. Most, therefore, read "The mountains rose; the valleys sank," and suppose it parenthetical: for the rest of

* See an exceedingly interesting volume by Sir J. W. Dawson, which gives in brief the evidence: "The Meeting-place of Geology and History." (Religious Tract Society, England.)

3 (10-15): Springs of refreshment. (i.) their sources. (ii.) sustenance. (iii.) birds of heaven. (iv.) the ground.

He sendeth the *f*springs into the valleys:
they run among the mountains.
They give *g*drink to every beast of the field:
the wild asses quench their thirst.
By them the *h*birds of the heavens dwell:
from among the branches they give voice.
He *i*watereth the hills from his upper chambers:
the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.

f *cf.* De. 8.7. *cf.* Is.41.18.
g *ctr.* 1 Ki. 18. 5. ver. 21.
h *cf.* Gen. 9. 10 with Ps. 145. 9.
i Ps. 65. 10.

the verse, as well as the following one, speaks again of the waters. The "place appointed" is evidently the "one place" into which the waters are gathered on the third day, and does not refer to either mountains or valleys; on the other hand, it is awkward to take the first half of the verse as a parenthesis. But there seems no reason why we should not translate, "Mountains ascended: they went down the valleys"; which preserves the connection, and makes the language vividly pictorial.

The next verse speaks then of the bound assigned by God to the retreating waters, so as to prevent their return again. Thus man's earth has been recovered and is preserved for him: the typical aspect of it has been pointed out elsewhere (Genesis i: *notes*). The more we study this, the more we shall be satisfied that the typical meaning is no arbitrary accommodation of the facts to spiritual illustration, but one deeply grounded in the nature of things: in short, we shall realize what the psalm before us emphasizes, that the Redeemer and the Creator are One.

3. But it is not enough that man's abode should be separated from the waters. Merely separated, the dry land would be for him but indeed a barren possession, upon which he could not sustain himself a few brief days. Earth (and therefore man) is dependent on heaven, a deeply spiritual truth, of which all nature is full; and to this now we come, the springs of refreshing which, though they are ministered from the earth, are not of earth. "*He* sendeth the springs into the valleys: they run among the mountains." The well-known type of the Spirit is the "living water"—water that has in it the power which is first of all derived from its descent from heaven, though it come by whatever underground channels to the place in which we find it. "They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst." How free are all God's gifts; and the most absolutely necessary are just the freest. Fresh air, sunshine, the streams that water the earth: these are as generally distributed, as they are everywhere needful. The "wild asses" are the very type of rebellious intractability; but "He maketh His sun to shine upon the evil and upon the good; and sendeth rain upon the just and on the unjust." And He who has ascended up on high and received gifts for men, has done so "for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them."

And beside these springs the birds of the heavens dwell; and give voice among the branches. Natural worshipers as we may say, no *song*-bird was by the law of Leviticus ever unclean; and their notes, however various, are ever harmonious. Attracted by the water, they dwell above our heads, and sustain themselves upon their wings in unobstructed flight through paths in which no beast of earth can follow them.

Next, we have God's irrigation-system for the earth, in which the hills have their part in turning hither or thither the rain of God's "upper chambers," so that the rivers spread abroad to water the land. That which is nearest to heaven attracts most the rain of heaven; while by the law of its nature it cannot keep it, but must pass it on to others. Thus "the earth is satisfied,"—that which receives and is made fruitful by it being just that which, not as rock or sand, resists the force that would disintegrate, but the contrary: that which yields and crumbles as the humble and contrite heart yields to the divine Husbandman.

So the grass grows for cattle and herb for the service of man; God bent upon

(v.) man with God.

(vi.) discipline and encouragement.

4 (16-18): A lesson of experience.
(i.) sufficiency of His care.
(ii.) ministering to others also.
(iii.) refuges.

He causeth the [j]grass to grow for cattle,
and herb for the service of man,—
bringing forth food out of the earth;
And [k]wine which gladdeneth frail man's heart;
he maketh his face shine with [l]oil;
and [with] [m]bread he strengtheneth frail man's heart.
The [n]trees of Jehovah are full,—
the cedars of Lebanon which he hath planted:
Where the birds make their [o]nests,
as for the [p]stork, the fir-trees are her house.
The high hills are for the [q]wild goats:
the rock-clefts a refuge for the [r]hyrax.

j Ps. 147. 8. Gen. 1. 11, 29, 30. Job. 38. 26, 27.
k Judg. 9. 13. *cf.* Ps. 4. 7. Prov. 31. 6, 7.
l Ps. 23. 5. *cf.* Acts 6. 5, 15. Is. 61. 3.
m *cf.* Is. 55. 10, 11.
n *cf.* Is 55. 13. *cf.* Hos. 14. 5-7.
o *cf.* De. 22. 6.
p Lev. 11. 13, 19. Jer. 8. 7.
q Job 39. 1. r Lev. 11. 5; Prov. 30. 26.

maintaining the creature, whom He has set in dignity upon the earth as His image and likeness, to know Him and to be for Him, and made him thus of all most thoroughly dependent, even because master of all. Where is there a creature ordained to frailty and long helplessness like a human babe? Where is there one so defenceless naturally, with neither tooth nor claw nor strength nor speed and with his very skin denuded to the blast, as is man in his prime? It is spirit in him that is to manifest itself and does, but by the recognition of his dependence and his careful use of all God's gifts.

Truly he is "*frail* man" (*enosh*); but now, alas! called to know a frailty to which not creation but his sin destines him. Now there is discipline for him in it, which he needs, and in which still divine love acts. While that additional need has brought out as never before God's tenderness in it: the wine that gladdeneth frail man's heart, the bread that strengtheneth frail man's heart,—how the words, and the repetition of the words, breathe of God's thoughtful care in upholding one who may so easily give way in discouragement! "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto the bitter in soul: let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more." (Prov. xxxi. 6, 7.)

Bread and wine: may we not find symbol here? And with these, "oil to make his face to shine!" Christ and the Spirit! we do no violence to the work of the Redeemer-Creator when we find these here.

4. The fourth section—of but three verses—seems to add, to what we have just had, a brief lesson of experience as to this care of God for the creatures He has made. It is briefer, I suppose because it is so much in the general line of thought in this creation-psalm. Beyond it there are problems that must be faced, and which will occupy much more time; and for which we will do well to be well furnished.

The lessons—for there are more than one—are all the more such and suited for refreshment by their simplicity. It is good to see how all around us are the assurances of divine loving-kindness. In the buoyant happiness of childhood, in the fragrance and delicate tints of a common flower, in the hues of sunset, in every direction, in short, that we may look, apart from effects of sin, we find abundant evidence of One who has thought, not merely of the preservation but of the enjoyment of His creatures: pleasures of sense, pleasures for the mind, pleasures for the heart, quite beyond any need of theirs, if we think merely of what is implied in the necessity of things going on (if that in fact should be a necessity). The eye, the ear, the man in his whole being, finds without seeking, without soliloquizing about it, constant sources of enjoyment. Something of this sort, though objectively considered, we have here. "The trees of Jehovah are full:" strength, beauty, delicacy of workmanship, are in those "cedars of Lebanon which He has planted." And then they do not grow for themselves

5 (19-23): Government and exercise occasioned.
(i.) appointed times.
(ii.) darkness.
(iii.) compassing round.
(iv.) passive in His hands.
(v.) the responsible being.

He hath made the [s]moon for seasons:
the [t]sun knoweth his going down.
Thou appointest [u]darkness, and it is night:
wherein all the [v]beasts of the wood creep forth.
The [w]young lions roar after their prey,
even seeking their food from God.*
The sun [x]ariseth, they gather together,
and lay them down in their dens.
Man goeth forth unto his [y]work
and unto his labor, until the evening.

6 (24-30): Divine control.
(i.) wisdom in all His works.
(ii.) the sea also.

How [z]manifold are thy works, Jehovah!
in [a]wisdom hast thou made them all:
the earth is [b]full of thy riches.
This great and wide [c]sea also,
wherein are [d]moving things innumerable,—
living creatures, small and great.

[s] Gen. 1. 16. Jer. 31. 35.
[t] Ps. 74. 16.
[u] Is. 45. 7. Ps. 139. 12.
[v] Ps. 50. 10, 11. Ps. 148. 10.
[w] Job 38. 39–41. Ps. 145. 15. *cf.* Joel 1. 20.
[x] *cf.* Mk. 1. 13.
[y] *cf.* Jno. 11. 9, 10.
[z] Ps. 111. 2, 4.
[a] Prov. 3. 19.
[b] Ps. 145. 5, 9, 10, 17.
[c] Ps. 95. 5.
[d] Gen. 1. 20, 21.

* El.

simply, but minister to the birds that rejoicingly flock to and nest in their covert; while the gloomy fir gives hospitable shelter to the home-loving stork. The high hills, too, furnish a refuge for feet like those of the wild goat, specially prepared for them; and the very clefts of the rock provide one for the timid and feeble hyrax. Thus the earth is a house of many chambers, in which her various inhabitants find various provision; God is the great host of multitudinous tenantry.

5. But we come now to consider His government; in which there are difficulties that give room and exercise for faith. His appointed times contemplate darkness as well as light. This is plainly the point in question; and thus the moon is mentioned before the sun, and as to the latter simply his *going down*. Yet the moon shows darkness not unrelieved; and not relieved by hap-hazard. Darkness, however, is of His appointment; which is comfort and yet mystery: and at His appointment, too, the night brings the wild beasts from their lairs. The young lions are cared for, as the innocent sheep, and roaring after prey, seek it and find it from God. Thus the devourer is provided for, as all else: there is no shirking that; and nature witnesses plainly as to it: tooth, claws, and tongue bear witness for the lion. Who gave them to him? The Same who gave to the lion's prey the agility for escape. An equal hand has been at work for both, as it if were designed to have the world a battlefield of not very unequal forces, each cared for and sustained. If the fittest do survive, as some say, it is hard enough to tell who are the fittest. The giants perish, and the pigmies live. "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." If there be design, then strife seems designed: as if the good and the evil, with the inevitable conflict arising from their co-existence, must have its counterpart and reflection in the whole frame of things amid which man is found; as it must, if nature at large be in any sense a parable of spiritual things—if the analogies between them be otherwise than mere deceptions.

The rein is kept upon this strife, even in the ordinances of day and night, with all that these imply: "the sun ariseth, they gather together and lay them down in their dens." And under this same subjection man is, with the addition of the toil which marks him as the responsible creature under the discipline of God: he "goeth forth unto his work and unto his labor, until the evening." His work is to be in the light, and not in darkness; and yet the darkness limits and controls him also in its measure. But it has its measure.

6. The next section, in its seven verses, emphasizes the full mastery of all things possessed by God. It opens with a declaration of the Creator's wisdom in all His works: manifold works, and every one showing His wisdom. Can any-

(iii.) realized control.

There go the [e]ships;
[there is] that [f]leviathan, which thou hast formed to play therein.

(iv.) waiting on Thee.

These all look unto thee:
that thou mayest give them their [g]food in its season.

(v.) creature with Creator.

That thou givest unto them they gather:
thou [h]openest thy hand, they are filled with good.

(vi.) the limit of life.

Thou [i]hidest thy face, they are troubled:
thou takest away their breath, they die,
and [j]return to their dust.

(vii.) perfect sufficiency.

Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created:
and thou [k]renewest the face of the ground.

7 (31–35): Rest in God.

(i.) eternal glory.

The [l]glory of Jehovah shall be for ever:
Jehovah [m]rejoiceth in his works.

(ii.) dependence of all on Him.

He looketh on the earth, and it [n]trembleth:
he toucheth the mountains, and they [o]smoke.

(iii.) the praise.

I will sing unto Jehovah [p]while I live:
I will psalm unto my God while yet I am.

[e] Ps. 107.23–31.
[f] Job. 41.
[g] Ps. 136.25. Ps. 147. 9.
[h] Ps. 145.15, 16.
[i] Job 34. 14, 15. *cf.* Ps. 49.20.
[j] Gen. 2. 19. Eccl. 12. 7.
[k] *cf.* Is. 32.15. *cf.* Is. 55.8–13.
[l] *cf.* Ps. 72. 7, 17.
[m] *cf.* Gen. 1. 31 with Rev. 21. 5.
[n] Hab. 3.10.
[o] Ps. 144. 5. Is. 64. 1, 2.
[p] Ps. 63. 4. Ps. 146. 2.

one produce one that does not? But this wisdom itself implies control of material: the mind must be sustained by the hand that it may be shown. Truly "the earth is full of Thy riches."

And so, too, is the at first sight barren sea, full of life in innumerable forms; where, above, the ships tossed upon its surface yet make it the highway of man, God's noblest workmanship; while beneath, the sea-monster sports in its depths. All these must be fed at His table, gather from His hand, be filled with what He gives; or, if He hide His face, suffer; if He take away their breath, go back to the dust from which they came. Yet is He the fountain of life, from which, if He send forth His Spirit, a new creation replaces these vanished forms, and the earth is renewed.

7. From all this the soul justifies its confidence in God, who is Jehovah the Eternal. His glory then shall last forever; and His works are not the playthings of His might, but He rejoices in them. Eternity will be thus the seal upon that final condition with which He at last shall be well pleased.

For thus even now does creation depend on Him, and sympathize with His every thought. If He look upon the earth it trembles; if He touch the mountains they are asmoke. How dreadful this almightiness of His, if He be unknown! If He be realized as what He is, how good that He should be sovereign absolutely! So the psalmist breaks out in a praise which can end but with his being. Nor is it a mere unreasoning emotion: his meditation upon Him shall be sweet, the knowledge of Jehovah shall make glad his heart. The one blot upon God's works shall disappear: "sinners shall be consumed out of the earth, *and* the wicked shall be no more." Then shall His works glorify Him indeed; and in the anticipation of it the heart praises Him.

Thus the song of creation ends. We may perhaps be disappointed after all, that there is no further attempt to lift the curtain of mystery that must be confessed to hang so thickly over much of God's governmental ways. But here Scripture always declares that "clouds and darkness are round about Him." Nor, though Christianity reveals Him as in the light, is this essentially altered. Still we are called to walk by faith, and to glorify Him by submission where we cannot penetrate His meaning. The difference that Christianity makes is that *God* is in the light—not all His acts or ways: which faith knows to be worthy of Him, even where it knows not *how* they are. Here the cross is indeed the bow in the cloud; and redemption shows the relation of God to sin itself, in perfect holiness

(iv.) which can be tested.
(v.) the end.

My [q]meditation upon him shall be sweet:
I will be [r]glad in Jehovah.
Sinners shall be [s]consumed out of the earth,
and the wicked be no more:
bless Jehovah, my soul. [t]Hallelujah.

[q] Ps. 19. 14.
[r] Ps. 92. 4.
[s] Ps. 101. 8.
[t] Ps. 105. 45.

Ps. cv.

[5]PSALM CV.

The story of His ways as with His people.

1 (1-7): Jehovah our God.
(i.) celebrate Him.
(ii.) meditate on Him.
(iii.) His holy Name.
(iv.) creature need.

GIVE thanks unto Jehovah, [u]call upon his Name:
[v]make known his deeds among the peoples.
Sing unto him, [w]psalm unto him,
[x]meditate on all his wondrous works.
[y]Glory ye in his holy Name:
let the [z]heart of them be glad that seek Jehovah.
Seek Jehovah and his strength:
[a]seek his face continually.

[u] Ps. 116.13.
[v] Ps. 96. 2. *cf.* Is. 60. 6. Ps. 145. 4,5, 11.
[w] Jer.20.13. Ps. 149. 1.
[x] Ps. 77. 12. Ps. 78. 4. *cf.* Mal.3.16.
[y] Ps. 44. 8.
[z] Ps. 40. 16.
[a] Ps. 27. 8. *cf.* Is.45.19.

and yet in love; and this is found here in the hundred and second psalm, Jehovah seen in the Man cut off in the midst of His days, yet the Creator of all, whose years shall have no end. This then throws its light over the darkest mysteries; and even the conflict of opposites which we discern in nature begins to be intelligible, as bringing it into accordance with earth's fallen head, and making it the symbolic utterance of spiritual things. True it is we know but little of nature in this character of it: we have mere glimpses of what the glorious vision should be. But what wonder when we have allowed Scripture itself to be practically so much hidden as it still must be confessed to be? Alas, we have not yet the key that shall completely open the door, and set us face to face with the unveiled mysteries. Thank God for what we know; but shall we not press on to what yet we know not?

PSALM CV.

The last two psalms of the book show us God's ways with His people, and (in confession on their part) their ways with Him, which had necessitated the discipline of His hand. But this has done its work, and they are thus ready for the final blessing, the principles and character of which we find fully in the fifth book.

These two psalms are naturally therefore of very simple character, a review of Israel's history as already known to us in the books of Moses, with a mere glance at the after events when in the land. In fact the story of the wilderness is typical of all the rest; just as Israel as a nation is but a sample of man generally, — the "heart of man" anywhere being but the full, fair reflection of "man" at large.

The hundred and fifth psalm is not the story of God's governmental ways with Israel as a whole, but simply of that which has to do with His action on their behalf, mainly in the deliverance in Egypt, and ending with their possession of the land. One verse alone declares this last.

1. The first section, in seven verses, calls for the celebration of Jehovah their God, as known in His glorious deeds. His Name is holy. His power is needed by human frailty. The "judgments of His mouth" interpret His acts, and make them illustration of His perfect ways. To this glorious God His people stand in relation as the "seed of Abraham His servant" the one marked by his history for his obedience as such. They are "the children" too, "of Jacob His chosen": whose history is of another character, and shows the struggle of a soul in the hand of God, whom it knows, but too little knows. And this necessitates those dealings of God with it, by which at last an Israel emerges out of a Jacob. These struggles and this divine discipline are, as easily seen, the type of the

(v.) His ways.
(vi.) Jacob His chosen.
(vii.) everywhere the same perfect God.

Remember his [b] wondrous works that he hath done:
his miracles, and the judgments of his mouth,
Ye seed of [c] Abraham his servant;
ye children of [d] Jacob, his chosen [ones].
He is Jehovah [e] our God:
his [f] judgments are in all the earth.

2 (8-12): His covenant-relation.
(i.) a perpetual covenant.
(ii.) with Abraham and Isaac.
(iii.) Jacob-Israel.
(iv.) the land.
(v.) weak with Strong.

He is ever [g] mindful of his covenant:
the word that he commanded to a thousand generations.
The [covenant] which he [h] made with Abraham,
and his [i] oath unto Isaac.
And he [j] confirmed it unto Jacob for a decree,—
to Israel for an [k] everlasting covenant:
Saying, Unto thee will I [l] give the land of Canaan—
the lot of your inheritance:
When they were but [m] few in number,
of no account, and sojourners in it.

3 (13-15): Fenced round.
(i.) the occasion.
(ii.) His deliverance.
(iii.) His anointed.

When they went from [n] one nation to another,—
from [one] kingdom to another people,—
He suffered no man to oppress them:
and [o] reproved kings for their sakes:
[Saying,] [p] Touch not mine anointed ones,
and do my prophets no harm.

4 (16-22): Under trial.
(i.) the occasion.

And he called for a [q] famine upon the land:
he brake the whole staff of bread.

[b] Ps. 77. 11. Ps. 78. 4.
[c] Ex. 3.6,15. Is. 41. 8. Is. 51. 2, 3.
[d] *cf.* Is.43.1, 2.
[e] Ps. 48. 14.
[f] Is.26.9-11.
[g] *cf.* Ps.89.3.
[h] Gen.22.16, 17. Heb. 6. 13-17.
[i] Gen. 26. 3.
[j] Gen. 28.13 -15.
[k] *cf.* Gal. 3. 15-18. *cf.* Rom.11. 25-29. *cf.* Is. 54. 7-10.
[l] Gen.13.14-17. *cf.* Ezek.47. 13-23.
[m] *cf.* De.7.7. Is. 51. 2.
[n] Gen. 12.6-9.
[o] Gen. 12. 17-19.
[p] Gen. 20.3-18. Gen. 31. 24.
[q] Gen. 41.53 -57.

nation's history afterward. They are but a too faithful reproduction of their father; while the victorious grace of God will not cease toward them, until in them also He has produced an Israel indeed. And this is "Jehovah our God," whose "judgments," essentially of the same character, "are in all the earth."

2. The psalmist goes on to speak of the covenant-relation in which He stands to them. It is an abiding one: He is ever mindful of it; He has commanded it to a thousand generations—a round number, as it would seem, for as many as may be (comp. Deut. vii. 9). Made with Abraham, and with an oath to Isaac, He confirmed it to Jacob for a decree unalterable, and to Israel as an everlasting covenant. Here the double name, and used evidently with regard to the people as well as to the father of their twelve tribes, has (as always) its significance. To Jacob, with all the frailty and sinfulness that the word implies, it takes nevertheless the form of a decree, the fixed expression of His absolute will; with Israel, in whom as such His transforming power is realized, it is an everlasting covenant. He works thus in perfect sovereignty, and according to the holiness of His own nature. According to this covenant the land is secured to them, and was so when they were in it as sojourners only, a few people and in men's account of no consideration.

3. The next section, briefly but effectively, shows how in their after-history Jehovah was a sanctuary to them: according, indeed, to the care He had shown for Abraham, when Abraham himself also had been sadly untrue to the promise which had been given him, in yielding up the designated mother of the seed to be, into the hands of the Philistine king (Gen. xx.), and here He owns His "prophet" in the one who had so failed. This was but a sample of how He had come in for the nation in whom He had set the mouth-pieces of His revelation to man. And here is the declaration of those larger purposes of His which connect themselves with this people, set apart not for their own blessing merely, as

(ii.) the servant of God and man.
(iii.) the realization.
(iv.) testing.
(v.) the divine issue.
(vi.) Joseph the master.
(vii.) in fulness of power.

5 (23–35): Exercised, but God with them.
a (23, 24): the occasion.
(i.) the entrance into Egypt.
(ii.) increase over enemies.
b (25–27): the opposition and intervention.
(i.) the occasion.
(ii.) the deliverers.
(iii.) signs.

He had [r]sent a man before them—
Joseph, who was [s]sold for a servant.
His feet they hurt with [t]fetters:
the iron entered his soul.
Until the [u]time that his word came to pass,
the word of Jehovah tried him.
The king sent and loosed him,
—the ruler of peoples—and let him go free.
He made him [v]lord of his house,
and ruler of all his substance:
To bind his princes at his pleasure,
and teach his old men [w]wisdom.

And [x]Israel came into Egypt:
and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.
And he [y]increased his people greatly,
and made them [z]stronger than their adversaries.
He turned their heart to [a]hate his people,
to deal [b]subtly with his servants.
He sent [c]Moses his servant,—
[d]Aaron whom he chose:
They showed his [e]signs among them,
and his miracles in the land of Ham.

r Gen. 45. 5. Gen. 50. 20.
s Gen. 37. 26–28, 36.
t Gen. 39. 19, 20. Gen. 40. 15.
u Gen. 41. 1, 14.
v Gen. 41. 38–44.
w Gen. 41. 8, 16.
x Gen. 45. 28. Gen. 46. 1–30.
y Ex. 1. 7.
z Ex. 1. 9.
a Ex. 1. 11–14.
b Ex. 1. 10. Acts 7. 19.
c Ex. 2. 1–10. Ex. 3. 1–18.
d Ex. 4. 14–17.
e Ex. 7. 1–13.

not at all on account of righteousness in them, but in grace towards all the sons of men.

4. The fourth section naturally speaks of trial; but while the famine which came upon the land in Jacob's time is the occasion of it, the psalmist goes on to show how God had provided for it by one sent before them into Egypt to be His servant in the service of man: one himself fully tried, and made to realize what in a world like this such service means; tried too by that word of Jehovah which in him as the Spirit of prophecy had announced His exaltation, and which at last came to pass. In Joseph we have, as every one knows, the type of the Lord Jesus, in whom God has provided indeed for blessing, both to Israel and the earth, and deliverance out of the great trial that is coming for both. The divine issue came at last for him: loosed from his chains, he is made the lord of Egypt, with fullness of power based upon fullness of wisdom. Such an One, but far transcending Joseph, shall the world find at last.

5. But Israel's coming into Egypt was only their introduction into manifold experiences, in which they found exercise indeed, but God manifesting Himself with them in that which fell upon the mightiest power of that day,—signs which Israel themselves could ever look back to with thanksgiving and for the renewal of confidence, and which are to be repeated in their deliverance in the last days (Mic. vii. 15, and comp. Rev. xvi.), and are the necessary humiliation of all the pride of the world and its idols before God, when the day of the Lord succeeds man's day.

(*a*) Two verses show the occasion of these trials. First, "Israel came into Egypt": the people of God, graced by the purpose of God, were in the land of "double straitness," the place of the conflict between the desert and the river,—of life struggling with death; alas, the land of Ham, the "sun-darkened," a darkness upon which the light shone and it comprehended it not. The people of God are in a world opposed to God; hence necessarily in opposition to them as that; but then this people of God are themselves looked at from another side,—"Jacob": and *Jacob*, though but a sojourner in the land of Ham, is in danger from more than *opposition*. He needs all the exercise through which he is made to pass.

They increase greatly, through the favor of God, and become stronger than

He sent [f]darkness, and made it dark:
and they rebelled not against his word.
He turned their waters into [g]blood,
and slew their fish.
Their land swarmed with [h]frogs,
in the chambers of their kings.
He spake and there came [i]swarms *:
[and] lice in all their borders.
He gave them [j]hail for rain,
flaming fire in their land.
He smote their vines and their fig-trees,
and brake the trees of their borders.
He spake, and the [k]locusts came,
and gnawers, and that without number.
And he devoured every herb in their land,—
devoured the fruit of their ground.

He smote also all the [l]first-born in their land—
the first-fruits of all their strength.
He [m]brought them forth also with silver and gold:
and there was no [n]feeble one among their tribes.

* *arob*, "mixture."

c (28–31): the signs proper. (i.) light withdrawn. (ii.) the means of refreshment death. (iii.) the unclean things from the river. (iv.) the swarms and lice—brand of vanity.
d (32–35): the desolation of the land. (i.) a concord of opposites. (ii.) destruction. (iii.) the full realization. (iv.) complete prostration.
6 (36–45): Victory.
a (36): the first-born.
b (37, 38): the going forth. (i.) in strength.

f Ex. 10.21–23.
g Ex. 7. 19–25. Ps. 78. 44.
h Ex. 8. 1–14. Ps. 78. 45.
i Ex. 8. 16–24.
j Ex. 9. 18–26. Ps. 78. 47, 48.
k Ex. 10. 4–15. Ps. 78. 46.
l Ex. 11. 4–6. Ps. 78. 51.
m Ex. 12. 35, 36.
n cf. Ex. 15. 26.

their enemies, as Pharaoh's own words declare (Ex. i. 9). And here is the way, doubtless, in which we are to interpret the verse following: "He turned their heart to hate His people." It needs no more than that the favor of God should be thus manifested, to set the tide of opposition in full force.

(*b*) The opposition and God's intervention for them are next spoken of. Moses is sent, and Aaron, and signs and wonders show unmistakably the broad seal of their commission.

(*c*) The order in which the miracles are given is different from the historical one. For this, of course, there must be a reason. It would seem that we have a classification of them in two divisions: first, the signs proper, those whose force lay for the most part in their testimony to the conscience; the second consists rather of those that really prostrated the land—miracles of destruction that made Egypt desolate. Among the signs proper, the darkness is put at the head, the light of heaven withdrawn: one of those things which would appeal most strongly to the conscience of man as supernatural; and which to the Egyptians, who made the night especially a sign of the prevalence of evil, and for whom the sun was the great deity, would be a cause of the greatest consternation. In fact, they moved not from their seats during the three days it lasted: a thing to which the psalmist refers here when he says, "they rebelled not against His word." To refer this (with most interpreters) to the Israelite leaders, in contrast with their conduct at the waters of Meribah, seems quite opposed to the connection. Nor can it refer to the final submission of the Egyptians; here they were appalled into perfect stillness—no doubt, only for the time: but it made their after-attitude all the more solemn.

Next we have, what was really the first miracle of judgment, the waters turned to blood, the means of refreshment becoming death, and then that of the frogs swarming out of the river-bed, and into the chambers of the king, as to which I can add nothing to the notes on the book of Exodus. The lice follow, in the historical order; but with these are put the "swarms" or "mixture" (probably, of flies), which may there go with the lice (see the "notes" Ex. viii. 16–19) in stamping man with the brand of vanity.

(*d*) The moral or spiritual lessons are indeed thus far upon the surface, and

(ii.) their adversaries.
c (39): His presence.
d (40, 41): the wilderness.
(i.) sufficient provision.
(ii.) refreshment out of the rock.
e (42–45): the end.
(i.) the ground.
(ii.) joyful deliverance.
(iii.) possession of the inheritance.
(iv.) the practical effect.

Egypt was °glad at their departing:
for the fear of them had fallen on them.
He spread a ᵖcloud for a covering,
and fire to give light in the night.
They asked, and he brought ᵍquails,
and filled them with ʳbread of heaven.
He opened the ˢrock, and the waters gushed out,
they ran in the dry places like a river.
For he ᵗremembered his holy word:
[and] Abraham his servant.
And he brought forth his people with ᵘjoy,
and his chosen ones with singing.
And he gave them the ᵛlands of the nations,
and they possessed the labor of the races.
That they might ʷobserve his statutes,
and keep his laws. Hallelujah.

o Ex. 12. 33.
p Ex. 13. 21, 22. Neh. 9. 12. Ps. 78. 14.
q Ex. 16. 12, 13.
r Ex. 16. 14, 15. Ps.78.24,25.
s Ex. 17. 6. Nu. 20. 10, 11. Ps.78.15,16.
t Ex.2.24.25.
u Ex. 15. 1–21.
v Ps. 44. 1-3. Ps. 78. 55.
w De. 4. 1. De. 27. 11–26. Josh. 24.13–25.

ᵉPSALM CVI.

God's discipline of the people for their evil.

Ps. cvi.

1 (1-5): Jehovah the fountain of good.
(i.) eternal goodness.
(ii.) deeds unutterable.
(iii.) the character of those who realize this goodness.
(iv.) prayer for such experience.

HALLELUJAH!
Give ˣthanks to Jehovah; for he is good:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
Who can utter Jehovah's ʸmighty acts?
[or] tell forth all his praise?
ᶻHappy are they that keep judgment,
and he that ᵃdoeth righteousness at all times.
ᵇRemember me, Jehovah, with [thy] favor towards thy people;
visit me with thy salvation.

x Ps. 107. 1.
y Zech.9.16, 17.
z Ps.119.1-3.
a Ps. 15. 2. *cf.* Jno.8.29.
b *cf.* Neh.13. 14, 22, 31. Ps. 119.132.

well-fitted to bring the conscience into the presence of God. Those that follow compel man to feel, whether he has conscience or not. Hail and lightning together break up the fruit-trees in the land, while the locusts strip it of every green leaf to be found. Its desolation is complete, although not yet is their rebellious pride humbled; and it requires one last decisive blow to bring submission.

6. The rest of the psalm details the victory of God; the incidents of the wilderness and the putting them in possession of the land itself being associated with the deliverance from Egypt naturally, as completing what began there. The story speaks for itself, and needs no comment. The death of the first-born, their own departure from the land in prosperous strength, the fear in the hearts of their enemies; His presence with them, sheltering and guiding; the satisfaction of their hunger, refreshment brought for them out of the flinty rock: this sums up the deliverance accomplished, in which the word of promise is fulfilled and Abraham is remembered. They are brought into the land, to possess labors not their own; and this is to be the practical effect of all upon them, "that they might observe His statutes, and keep His laws."

PSALM CVI.

The last psalm of the book, as already said, gives us the history of the people from another side,—their ways with God, which entailed upon them the long discipline which is even yet upon them. This discipline, with all its sorrow, is of course still His love; and shows Him Master over the evil, and in grace towards them. This psalm is their confession of their sin, and their final appeal

(v.) the end desired.

2 (6-12): Confession of sin and His salvation.
(i.) we all.
(ii.) the provocation at the Sea.
(iii.) yet for His Name's sake.
(iv.) the way through the Sea.
(v.)——
(vi.) the victory.
(vii.) the complete end.

3 (13-33): God sanctifying Himself.
a (13-15): their independence of heart.
(i.) will.
(ii.) lusting.
(iii.) the satisfaction of their desire.
b (16-18): the double opposition.
(i.) the rebellion.
(ii.) the destruction of the transgressors.

That I may see the [c]prosperity of thy chosen;
that I may rejoice in the [d]joy of thy nation;
that I may glory with thine [e]inheritance.

We have [f]sinned with our fathers:
we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.
Our [g]fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt:
they [h]remembered not the multitude of thy mercies;
and were rebellious at the [i]sea—at the Red Sea.
But he saved them for his [j]Name's sake,
that he might make his mighty [k]power known.
He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it was [l]dried up;
and he [m]led them through the depths as through the wilderness.
And he [n]saved them from the hand of him that hated [them],
and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.
And the waters [o]covered their adversaries:
not one of them was left.
So they believed his word:
they [p]sang his praise.

They soon [q]forgat his works:
they [r]waited not for his counsel.
But [s]lusted [their] lust in the wilderness;
and [t]tempted the Mighty One in the waste.
And he [u]gave them their request;
and sent leanness into their soul.
They [v]envied Moses also in the camp,
[and] Aaron, the holy one of Jehovah.
The earth [w]opened and swallowed up Dathan,
and covered the assembly of Abiram.

c Ps. 37. 11, 34.
d Is. 9. 3. Is. 65. 18.
e De. 32. 9. Ps. 33. 12.
f Lev.26.40. Dan. 9.4-8. Neh. 9. 33-36.
g. Ezek. 20. 8, 9.
h ver. 13.
i Ex. 14. 10-12.
j *cf.* Ex. 32. 11-14. *cf.*Josh.7.9.
k *cf.* Josh.2. 10, 11. *cf.*Ex. 9.16.
l Ex. 14. 21, 22.
m Is. 63. 11-14. Ps. 78. 13.
n Ex. 14. 30, 31.
o Ex. 14. 27, 28. Ex. 15. 5.
p Ex. 15. 1-21.
q Ps. 78. 11.
r *cf.* Ex. 15. 22-24.
s *cf.* Nu. 11. 4-10.
t Ps.78. 18. Ex. 16. 2,3.
u Nu. 11.31-35. Ps.78.29-31.
v Nu.16.1-5.
w Nu.16.29-34. De. 11. 6.

to this grace of His, for the salvation now at hand. It begins and closes with the heart-utterance of His praise.

1. The first section praises Him as the source of all good, in a loving-kindness which endures forever. His deeds are past expression; and all of them are His praise. Happy, then, are they who keep judgment and do righteousness at all times: these are His people, the heirs of His favor, with whom the psalmist desires to be remembered; and visited by His salvation to that end. This is Israel, His chosen nation and inheritance, whose prosperity as promised by His word is before the eye of faith.

2. But as the psalmist looks he realizes what has so long kept this favored people out of their destined blessing; and he owns with them their sins, present and past, their fathers' and their own; going back to the history of the wilderness, as a complete sample of all their history since. Fresh from the manifold mercies of their wondrous deliverance, they were rebellious in their unbelief of His power and grace, from the Red Sea itself, where they would have gone back into that hard Egyptian servitude in sheer distrust of Him who yet saved them for His Name's sake, to make His power known. He led them through the depths of the sea, as if it were the dry ground of the wilderness. He redeemed them with His right hand from the enemy; and their enemies were swept away before the returning waters: not one of them was left. Then they believed His word, and sang His praise.

3. But they soon forgot all this; and the third section shows how in the

(iii.) fire from the Lord.
c (19-23): image-worship.
(i.) a self-chosen god.
(ii.) abased to an ox-form.
(iii.) the manifest God forgotten.
(iv.) and their experience.
(v.) governmental ways.
d (24-27): the failure which left them in the wilderness.
(i.) independence.
(ii.) opposition.
(iii.) under the ban.
(iv.) dispersed over the world.
e (28-31): governmental atonement.
(i.) the occasion.
(ii.) wrath.
(iii.) sanctification by judgment.
(iv.) righteousness.

And a [x]fire was kindled in their assembly:
the flame burned up the wicked.
They made a [y]calf in Horeb,
and worshiped a molten image:
And [z]changed their glory
into the likeness of an ox that eateth grass.
They [a]forgot the Mighty One their Saviour,
who had done [b]great things in Egypt,—
Wondrous things in the land of Ham,—
terrible things at the Red Sea.
And he [c]spake of destroying them,
had not [d]Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach,
to turn away his hot anger from destroying [them].
They [e]despised also the pleasant land:
they [f]believed not his word;
But [g]murmured in their tents;
they hearkened not to the voice of Jehovah.
So he lifted up his hand against them,
causing them to [h]fall in the wilderness;
Causing their seed also to fall among the nations,
and [i]scattering them in the lands.
They joined themselves also unto [j]Baal-peor,
and ate the sacrifices of the dead.
So they [k]provoked him with their doings,
and the [l]plague brake forth upon them.
Then stood up [m]Phinehas, and executed judgment;
and [so] the plague was stayed.
And that was [n]counted unto him for righteousness
from generation unto generation evermore.

x Nu. 16. 35. cf. Jude 11.
y Ex. 32. 1-4.
z Jer. 2. 11. Rom. 1. 23.
a ver. 13.
b Ps. 78. 11, 12.
c Ex. 32. 9, 10. De. 9. 14.
d Ex. 32. 11-14.
e Nu. 14. 1-10.
f Heb. 3. 17-19.
g Nu. 14. 2, 27.
h Nu. 14. 29-35.
i Ezek. 20. 23, 24.
j Nu. 25. 1-5. De. 4. 3. Hos. 9. 10.
k De. 32. 16, 17.
l Nu. 25. 9.
m Nu. 25. 7, 8.
n Nu. 25. 10-13.

wilderness itself, their manners forced the blessed God their Saviour to sanctify Himself in judgment upon them. Slipping away from Him once more, their hearts lusted for their own will; and tempted the Mighty One in doubt of His ability to save. His very answer, which displayed His might for them, brought but leanness into their souls. So it is with the soul away from God: the satisfaction of the thirst, as with salt water, but increases it.

(*b*) The open rebellion follows the veiled one. They envy their God-given leaders, and throw off the authority of Moses and the priestly office of Aaron, Jehovah's sanctified one. The more open rebellion calls forth the severer judgment: the earth swallows up Dathan and Abiram, and the fire of God consumes those who insolently venture in their own right to draw near to Him.

(*c*) Next, not in historical, but in moral order, their image-worship in Horeb assaults God Himself, whose glory they profane to the mere likeness of a beast —an ox that eateth grass! forgetting all His wondrous deeds in that very Egypt, where He had prostrated the false gods to which now they equaled Him. Here Moses' intercession alone had saved them from the penalty of that covenant which in their self-righteousness they had made with Him.

(*d*) Now comes the failure for which all that generation perished in the wilderness, mere wanderers in a desert-land. And with this punishment the psalmist connects the after-wanderings of the nation, after Canaan had been possessed; but when they had no more faith to retain the possession than now to acquire it.

(*e*) Next we have their joining themselves to Baal-peor, and Phinehas' atone-

f (32,33): discipline at the height.
(i.) Moses the leader.
(ii.) by their provocation.

They moved him to wrath also at the waters of [o]Meribah,
and it went ill with [p]Moses upon their account.
For they provoked his spirit,
and he spake unadvisedly with his lips.

4 (34-39): The failure in the land.
(i.) as to Jehovah's command.
(ii.) the mingling.
(iii.) idol worship.
(iv.) inhuman deeds.
(v.) the land polluted.
(vi.) the height of evil.

They did [q]not destroy the peoples,
as to whom Jehovah spake to them,
But [r]mingled themselves among the nations,
and learned their works.
And they [s]served their idols,
and these became a snare unto them;
They [t]sacrificed also their sons
and their daughters unto demons,
And shed innocent blood—the blood of their sons and daughters—
which they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan;
and the land was [u]polluted with blood.
So they were defiled with their own works,
and [v]prostituted themselves with their doings.

5 (40-46): His ways in recompense.
(i.) the cause, His anger.
(ii.) giving them up to their enemies.
(iii.) the realization.

And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against his people,
and he [w]abhorred his own inheritance;
And he [x]gave them into the hand of the nations,
so that those that hated them ruled over them,
And their enemies [y]oppressed them,
and they were bowed down under their hand.

o Nu. 20, 3. 13. Ps. 95. 8.
p Nu. 20. 7-12. Nu. 27. 12-14.
q Judges 1. 21, 27-35.
r Judges 2. 2. Judges 3.5, 6.
s Judges 2. 13.
t 2 Ki. 16.3.
u Ezek. 20. 26. Nu. 35. 33.
v Ezek. 16. 15-34. Ezek. 20. 30, 31.
w *cf.* Is.1.10-15.
x Judges 2. 14, 15.
y *cf.* Judges 4. 1-3. *cf.* Judges 6. 1-6.

ment by judgment (see Num. xxv. *notes*) to the government of God; an act which God marks for all succeeding time, with His emphatic approval. Let us note it as very needful to keep in mind, in days so lax as these as to divine holiness. Phinehas is no less a priest in the intercessory place, when he uses the sword of judgment.

(*f*) Lastly, the sin of the people affects even the leader himself; and Moses fails to enter the land of promise. The intercessor for others finds himself no availing intercession. The discipline of God takes account of all alike. Moses, swan-like, sings his song and dies. But the song abides and is still a song, to be sung yet upon the sea of glass, with the song of the Lamb (Rev. xv. 2, 3).

4. The wilderness-history is over, and we have now the story of the failure in the land. It is in principle ever the same, taking its shape only according to the command which tests them,—here the cleansing of the inheritance of the Lord from all that which had defiled it. The nations of Canaan were under the ban for their iniquity and Jehovah had intrusted the execution of this to their hands. Instead of this they left them in it and mingled themselves with them, with the sure result which had been predicted, that they learned their works. Their gods became a snare to them, and the unnatural deeds connected with their demon-worship became the shame and pollution of Israel. The innocent blood of their sons and daughters stained their altars and defiled their lands. Their deeds corrupted them ever more deeply.

5. Jehovah's ways with them were in necessary recompense. His anger was kindled against them, and He abhorred the inheritance they had polluted. Thus they were given over to their enemies and bowed down under their hand. Frequently as they were delivered, so frequently did they afresh provoke Him with their evil, and were again brought low.

(iv.) their departure from Him bringing about their prostration.
(v.) the weak with the strong.
(vi.) the covenant as a limit.
(vii.) the end.

[z] Many times did he deliver them:
but as for them they [a] provoked him with their counsel,
and were brought low by their iniquity.
Yet he [b] regarded their distress,
when he heard their cry.
And he [c] remembered for them his covenant,
and [d] repented according to the multitude of his loving-kindnesses.
And he caused them to [e] find mercy
of all those that carried them captive.

z Judges 2. 16. Neh. 9. 27.
a *cf.* Judges 3. 8.
b *cf.* Judges 3. 15.
c Lev. 26. 41, 42.
d Judges 2. 18.
e *cf.* Ezra. 9. 9. *cf.* Jer. 42. 12.

6 (47): prayer for divine victory and triumph.

[f] Save us, Jehovah our God:
and [g] gather us from among the nations;
to give thanks unto thy holy Name,
[and] [h] triumph in thy praise.

f 1 Chr. 16. 35, 36.
g *cf.* 1 Ki. 8. 46–53. *cf.* Ps. 107. 2, 3.
h Ps. 126. 1–3.

7 (48): praise.

[i] Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel,
from everlasting to everlasting:
and let all the people say, Amen.
[j] Hallelujah.

i Ps. 41. 13. Ps. 72. 18, 19. Ps. 89. 52.
j Ps. 105. 45.

But in their distress He could not but show His pity still; and His covenant of promise was a necessary limit to their chastisement. Amid all their wanderings and in their captivity He still caused mercy to be shown them by those who were His instruments to chasten them.

6. Looking back, then, over this history of constant failure, they could yet trace the love throughout, that had acted towards them. He could not openly display it as He would; but the one cause of this was unrepented evil. Now then in their confession of their sin He could return; and if He could, He would. They cry to Him for this: that He would save and gather them from the nations, that they might give thanks unto His holy Name, and triumph in His praise!

7. And the praise bursts forth. Jehovah is claimed confidently as Israel's God, and from everlasting to everlasting He is to be praised. Let all the people say, Amen!

Hallelujah!

BOOK V.

The Deuteronomic character of the fifth book is very easily to be discerned. The first psalm of it shows us the divine ways with Israel and with men at large, of whom they have been but the too faithful representatives. Quite like Moses' recital to the people in the plains of Moab, just in view of the land into which now they are to make speedy entrance (Deut. i.–iv.),—the people are here as gathered back out of the countries in which they had been scattered, and (as seen in the next psalm) now ready to take possession of the land. Here they are bidden to look back upon Jehovah's dealings with them, humbling and proving them indeed, but to "do them good at the latter end," that they might recognize wherein their true life consisted, and learn the perpetual goodness of their covenant-God.

These ways of God in their various character are told out in the first subdivision of seven psalms: in the first two with Israel, in the next two with Christ, ending with three Hallelujah psalms celebrating His Name. The second subdivision of six psalms (cxiv.–cxix.) shows us how these ways, when pondered in the heart aright, turn it and attach it to God. The third subdivision (cxx.–cxxxvi.) tells us now how fully He is for us, in all that His ways display

BOOK V. (Psalms cvii.-cl.)

The conclusion as to the divine ways.

SUBDIVISION 1. (Ps. cvii.-cxiii.)

Principles.

SECTION 1. (Ps. cvii., cviii.)

Efficient Grace.

Ps. cvii.

1 (1-9): To Israel once more in unity.

a (1-7): the goodness of Jehovah.

(i.) perpetual.

(ii.) the testimony of redeemed Israel.

(iii.) re-gathered to the land.

[1]PSALM CVII.

Constant and harmonious.

GIVE [k]thanks unto Jehovah, for he is [l]good:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for [m]ever.
Let the [n]redeemed of Jehovah say [so],
whom he hath redeemed from the [o]hand of the oppressor,
And [p]gathered them out of the lands,
from the rising and from the setting [sun],
from the north and from the sea.

k Chr.16.34. Ps. 106. 1. Ps. 118. 1. Ps. 136. 1.
l Ps. 25. 8. Ps. 34. 8. Ps. 145. 9. Nah. 1. 7.
m Ps.103.17.
n Ex. 15. 13. Is. 44. 23.
o Ps. 106.10. Jer. 31. 11.
p Deut.30.3. Is. 43. 5, 6. Jer.31.8-10. Ezek.11.17. Mi. 2. 12.

Him thus to be. While the fourth (cxxxvii.-cxlv.) gives us then the searching out of man in His presence, so as to leave us thus to rejoice in nothing but Himself. Lastly, we have—all that remains—the closing and universal praises.

SUBD. 1.

In the first subdivision the seven psalms divide (as these sevens generally do) into four and three, the last three being sufficiently distinct as Hallelujahs. The first four divide again into two equal parts of two psalms each. Israel is before us in the former two; Christ in the latter: these in perfect contrast with one another. With both indeed, the end is blessing; but fallen man, exalting himself, has first to be abased. The perfect Man, humbling Himself as none ever did beside, had *only* to be exalted.

There are thus three sections, characterized by the numerals: the first speaking of God's efficient grace to man; the second, of Christ in humiliation and rejection, answered with that Melchizedek priesthood under which all blessing comes; and thirdly, the tardy but at last full praise.

Sec. 1.

Israel is before us in the first section, as already said; their long wanderings at last ended, the multiplied exercises having brought forth the fruit designed, God's patient labor with them finding what love counts its recompense. The two psalms unite together evidently in this way; the first giving the principles, which apply not to Israel only, though standing in the forefront of their application; the second more concrete, the repossession of the land by the restored people.

PSALM CVII.

The first psalm proclaims the unchanging, harmonious goodness of Jehovah, which finds the way of blessing for His people, spite of, and yet as recognizing, their sinful and rebellious behavior. The discipline of the way is the method of a grace which will not give up the objects of it; the furnace of affliction being provided for in the original covenant with Abraham, and of this the Egyptian bondage was but one example, even as their wilderness journey as redeemed from Egypt was but the prototype of their many wanderings since. The wilderness is now once for all exchanged for the "city of habitation," implying the abiding rest into which they are brought.

1. Jehovah is the name they celebrate, who has acted in a loving kindness

(iv.) wilderness-experience.
(v.) exercise.
(vi.) ended by their cry.
(vii.) rest now before them.

They [q]wandered in the wilderness, in a solitary way:
they found no [r]city of habitation.
Hungry and thirsty,
their soul [s]fainted in them.
Then they [t]cried unto Jehovah in their strait,
[and] he delivered them from their distresses.
And he [u]led them forth by a right way,
that they might go to a [v]city of habitation.

b (8, 9): let them answer to it!
(i.) a call to confession.
(ii.) for soul-hunger met.

Let them give thanks to Jehovah for his [w]loving-kindness,—
and for his [x]wonderful works to the children of men!
For he [y]satisfieth the longing soul;
and filleth the hungry soul with good.

2 (10-16): Deliverance of prisoners.
a (10-14): the goodness of Jehovah.
(i.) their condition permanent.
(ii.) for opposition to God.
(iii.) realized.
(iv.) experience in their need.
(v.) the governmental issue.

Those sitting in [z]darkness and the shadow of death,
bound in [a]affliction and iron,—
Because they [b]rebelled against the sayings of the Mighty One,
and [c]despised the counsel of the Most High,
And [d]he bowed down their heart with travail:
they stumbled, and there was [e]none to help.
Then they [f]cried unto Jehovah in their strait,
[and] he saved them out of their distresses.
He caused them to [g]go forth out of darkness and the shadow of death,
and [h]brake their bonds asunder.

q Deut. 32. 10. ver. 40. *cf.* Nu. 14. 33-35.
r vers. 7. 36. *cf.* Is. 26. 1.
s Ps. 143. 4. Lev. 26.36.
t vers.13,19, 28. Lam. 3.55-57. Jonah 2. 2. Ps.. 34. 6.
u cf. Ex. 13. 21, 22. *cf.* Is.11.16.
v Is. 62. 10-12. Zech. 1. 12, 17. Zech.8.1-8.
w vers. 15, 21, 31, 43. Jer. 9. 24.
x Ps. 78. 4. Is. 25. 1.
y cf. 1 Sam. 2. 5. Ps. 132. 15. Luke. 1.53.
*z cf.*Is. 9.1,2.
a cf. Job 36. 8.
b cf. Is. 63.9, 10. *cf.* Lam. 1. 20.
c Is. 5. 24.
d cf. Job 40. 11, 12. *cf.* Dan. 4. 37.
e cf. 2 Chr. 36. 16 with Deut. 32. 26; *cf.* Is. 63. 5. *f* vers. 6, 19, 28. *g* Ps. 68. 6; Is. 49. 9. *h cf.* Jer. 30. 8; *cf.* Nah. 1. 12-15.

which is always His characteristic, and redeemed them from the hand of the oppressor. They are gathered now from the east and west and north, and from the sea, the highway to so many countries then unknown that lie beyond it.

They have long been wanderers in a solitary way, with the brand of Cain upon them, always seeking possession of the earth, and finding in it but Aceldama, their own fatal purchase. Ahungered and athirst, with more than physical need, their soul fainted in them. Until, brought to seek from God alone, they cried unto Jehovah in their strait, and found deliverance from Him. A very simple and a very common story, but which needs, for all that, constant repetition. Now rest is before them, and their way is right (or straight) toward the city they are to inhabit. A crooked way is, on that account, a long one; and Deuteronomy marks how long they had made the way for themselves the first time in the wilderness by their crooked ways with God. Since then how long the road had been, indeed! Only the loving kindness of Jehovah could have brought them where they now were.

Let them answer to it then, and let His wondrous works be fittingly acknowledged by souls whose longing had found satisfaction, whose hunger had been appeased with good.

2. Israel come before us, however, not merely as in the wilderness, but as in the prison-house also,— in captivity to their enemies because of their sins. Thus they sat in darkness and the shadow of death, the light of life withdrawn, the iron bondage entering into their souls. There they abode without help or hope, save in the very One against whom they had rebelled, compelled now to own the supremacy of Him whose counsel they had despised. They had to realize their sin, bowed down with travail, stumbling and with none to help.

With the cry of need came, however, another experience, and He became their

b (15,16): let them answer.
(i.) a call to confession.
(ii.) for deliverance.

Let them give [i]thanks to Jehovah for His loving-kindness,
and for his wonderful works to the children of men.
For he hath [j]shattered the doors of brass,
and cut asunder the bars of iron.

3 (17-22): Healing of the soul.
a (17-20): the goodness of Jehovah.
(i.) revolting.
(ii.) going on to death.
(iii.) restoration.
(iv.) the experience.
b (21, 22): let them answer.
(i.) a call to confession.
(ii.) and testimony.

Fools, because of their * [k]revolt,
and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.
All [l]food their soul abhorreth,
and they draw [m]near unto the gates of death.
Then they [n]cry unto Jehovah in their strait,
[and] out of their distresses he saveth them.
He [o]sendeth his word, and healeth them,
and [p]rescueth them from their pit-falls.
Let them give [q]thanks unto Jehovah for his loving-kindness,
and for his wonderful works unto the children of men.
And let them [r]sacrifice sacrifices of thanksgiving,
and [s]declare his works with song.

4 (23-32): Seafarers.
a (23-30): the goodness of Jehovah.
(i.) their calling.
(ii.) the profit of it.
(iii.) manifestation.
(iv.) prostrate.
(v.) exercise.

They that go down to the [t]sea in ships,
that do business in great waters,—
These see the works of Jehovah,
and his [u]wonders in the deep.
For he speaketh, and [v]raiseth the stormy wind,
and lifteth up its waves.
They go up to the heavens, they go down to the depths:
their soul is [w]melted because of trouble.
They reel to and fro and stagger [x]like a drunken man,
and are at their [y]wits' end.†

* *Literally*, "the way of their."
† *Literally*, "all their wisdom is swallowed up."

i vers. 8, 21, 31.
j cf. Is. 45. 2.
k Is. 50. 1. Is. 58. 1.
l Job. 33.20-22. cf. Ps.102.4.
m Ps. 88. 3.
n vers. 6,13, 28.
o cf. Mat.8.8. cf. Jer. 33.6-16. cf. Hos. 14. 4. cf. Is. 53. 5.
p cf. Job 33. 18-25. cf. Is.38.17.
q vers. 8,15, 31.
r cf. Lev. 7. 11-15. Hos. 14. 2. Jer. 17. 26.
s Ps. 26. 7. Ps. 66. 16.
t cf. Jonah 1. 3-15. cf. Is. 57.20. cf. Dan. 7.2, 3, etc. with Deut. 28.64.
u Ps. 77. 19.
v Ps. 148. 8. cf. Acts 27. 14, etc.
w cf. Josh. 2. 9, 24. Is. 13. 7.
x cf. Is. 29. 9. cf. Is. 51. 17, 21.
y cf. 2 Chr. 20. 12. cf. Jer. 30. 5-7.

Saviour. His government, which had held them fast, now released them from their prison-house, and the darkness around them was dispersed. And again the call rings out for confession and praise for this great deliverance.

3. "The sufferings of the 'foolish nation' (Deut. xxxii. 6), when, filled with Jehovah's indignation, they find a snare in that which should have fed them (Rom. xi. 9, 10), and pine beneath the pressure of a more grievous famine than that of bread (Amos viii. 11–13), until, in answer to the cry of sorrow, the word of saving health is sent them from above (Deut. xxx., comp. Rom. x.), seem to be indicated in the next division. The language of ver. 22 is in agreement with this. Those who had vainly gone about to establish their own righteousness are called now to offer the sacrifices of thanksgiving (Heb. xiii.), and to declare *His* works with singing."— *Pridham on the Psalms.*

It is the deepest and most fundamental need, then, that is met here. Christ, the bread of life, had been rejected by them, and they are necessarily on the way to death. This strait His word alone can heal, and thus they are rescued from their pitfalls. Well may they now give Him, then, their thanks.

4. Pridham again says:—

"Besides the obvious force and beauty of the following verses (23–30) in their

(vi.) the end of distress.
(vii.) rest.
(viii.) the haven.
b (31, 32): let them answer.
(i.) a call to confession.
(ii.) and testimony.
5 (33–43): General governmental ways.
a (33–35): power.
(i.) the curse of barrenness.
(ii.) for evil.
(iii.) restoration.
b (36–41): love.
(i.) a fixed abode.
(ii.) increase.
(iii.) fenced by His care.

Then they [z] cry unto Jehovah in their strait,
and out of their distresses he delivereth them.
He [a] stilleth the storm to silence,
and the waves thereof are hushed.
Then they are glad because they are [b] quiet,
and he leadeth them to the haven of their [c] desire.
Let them give [d] thanks to Jehovah for his loving-kindness,
and for his wonderful works unto the children of men.
And let them [e] exalt him in the congregation of the people,
and praise him in the session of the elders.

He [f] turneth rivers into a wilderness,
and water-springs into dry ground;
A [g] fruitful land to saltness,
for the [h] wickedness of those that dwell therein.
He turneth the [i] wilderness into a pool of water,
and a dry land into water-springs.
And he [j] maketh the hungry to dwell there,
that they may prepare a [k] city of habitation,
And sow [l] fields and plant vineyards,
and produce fruits of increase.
And he [m] blesseth them, and they [n] multiply greatly,
and their cattle he suffereth not to decrease.

z vers. 6, 13, 19.
a Ps. 65. 7. *cf.* Luke 8. 22–25. *cf.* Rev. 21. 1.
b *cf.* 1 Ki. 5. 4. *cf.* Ps. 46. 9.
c *cf.* Is. 54. 11–13. *cf.* Is. 60. 8–11. *cf.* Jer. 31. 23–26.
d vers. 8, 15, 21.
e Ps. 57. 5, 11. Ps. 111. 1. *cf.* Is. 25. 1–5.
f *cf.* Deut. 28. 37–40. *cf.* 1 Ki. 17. 1.
g *cf.* Gen. 19. 25 with Gen. 13. 10.
h *cf.* Deut. 29. 22–28. *cf.* Jer. 22. 8, 9.
i Ps. 114. 8. Is. 35. 1–10.
j *cf.* Jer. 32. 36–44. *cf.* Is. 25. 6.
k *cf.* vers. 4, 7. Is. 26. 1.
l *cf.* Jer. 33. 10–14.
cf. Hos. 2. 21–23. *m* *cf.* Is. 19. 24, 25; *cf.* Jer. 31. 23. *n* Ps. 67. 6, 7; *cf.* Mal. 3. 10, 11.

simple meaning and their general application, we have, I believe, a figure of Jacob's restless trouble when, like a vexed and frightened mariner, he wandered up and down the wide sea of nations without ease (Deut. xxviii. 65), a friendless pilgrim of the Lord's displeasure, until the long-desired rest was gained at last, under the faithful guidance of Him who seeks His people in the dark and cloudy day (Ezek. xxxiv. 12). Accordingly we find in the hortatory remembrancer of praise that follows (ver. 32) a mention of the gathered people and their elders, who are now called on to celebrate, in the quiet resting-places of Immanuel's land, His faithful goodness and His might who had turned the long-endured tempest of affliction to the calm sunshine of perpetual peace. (Isa. liv. 11–13)."

True as the special application is, yet here is the general lot of the people of God, who are, as it were, by their very occupation, mariners, called to see the works of the Lord upon the deep. The numerical structure is here as plain and significant as indeed His meaning in such trial and the fitness of it should be. The "haven" is, as we see by the number, in the new scene, which has in it the promise of eternity.

5. In the last part Jehovah's ways in general are celebrated: ways which are characterized by power, love, and holiness.

He fashions and refashions the earth at His will, commanding fruitfulness into barrenness, but this because of the wickedness of those that dwell in it. Again He restores and makes fruitful the barren land; and here it is not said that there must be a moral reason: the Creator rejoices in the works of His hands, and requires a moral reason only for *not* acting according to this delight.

His love is naturally much more dwelt upon. He shows it in His provision for the hungry of that fixed abode which is the first thing needed by man for his development; with the city for association, and the fields with their need of sow-

(iv.) when brought low.
(v.) judgment in their behalf.
(vi.) and end of evil.

And [when] they are diminished and [o]brought low,
through oppression, calamity, and sorrow,
He poureth [p]contempt upon nobles,
and maketh them [q]wander in a pathless waste,
But setteth the needy on [r]high, out of humiliation,
and [s]maketh families like a flock.
The [t]upright see it and are glad,
and all iniquity hath [u]stopped its mouth.
Whoso is [v]wise and observeth this,
even such shall discern the loving-kindness of
Jehovah.

c (42, 43): holiness manifest.
(i.) in power.
(ii.) and in love.

Ps. cviii.

[2]PSALM CVIII.

The incoming Salvation.

A song, a psalm of David.

1 (1-4): Israel as first-fruits.
(i.) purpose of heart.
(ii.) the accompaniment.
(iii.) the praise of Israel.
(iv.) universal experience.

MY heart is [w]fixed, O God:
I will [x]sing and psalm,—[with] my [y]glory also.
[z]Awake, psaltery and harp!
I will [a]awake the dawn.
I will praise, Jehovah, [b]among the peoples
and will psalm to thee among the races [of men].
For thy mercy is great [c]above the heavens,
and thy [d]truth unto the clouds.

o Lev.26.22. Is. 24. 5, 6.
p Job 12. 21. Dan. 4. 37.
q Job 12. 24, 25. ver. 4.
r 1 Sam. 2.8. Ps. 113. 7,8. *cf.* Dan. 4. 17. *cf.* Job 36. 7–11.
s Ps. 68. 6. *cf.* Is. 49. 18–23.
t Ps. 37. 34. Ps. 52. 6.
u 1 Sa. 2. 9. Ps. 63. 11.
v Jer. 9. 12, 13. Hos. 14. 9. Dan. 12.10.
w Ps. 57. 7-11 (ref'es). 2 Chron.30. 19. Ezra 7. 10. *ctr.* Ps. 78. 37.
x Ps 95. 1.
y Ps. 30. 12. *cf.* Ps. 16.9.
z *cf.* Judg.5. 12. *cf.* Is.52.1,2.
a *cf.* Ps. 22. title; *cf.* Ps. 110. 3; Ps. 5. 3.
b Ps. 105. 1; Ps. 9. 11.
c Ps. 71. 19; *cf.* Jer. 31. 35-37; *cf.* Is. 51. 6.
d Ps. 89. 2.

ing and planting for increase. So by His blessing they multiply as fenced by His hand, with the cattle He has prepared for them as servants and allies.

But evil is here, attending on man's sin, and oppression is found and various trial. He takes up the cause of the needy and down-trodden, pouring contempt upon nobles, and making them wander in a pathless waste who cared not for the fellows God had provided for them; while He lifts the needy up out of his humiliation, and makes families like a flock.

Holiness is manifest in all His ways: the upright are made glad as they see it; iniquity itself has its mouth stopped. Whoever would be wise will observe this: such shall discern the loving kindness of Jehovah.

Psalm CVIII.

The second psalm of the fifth book is very lightly treated by many commentators: as an example, Moll declares:—

"Two fragments of Davidic psalms, namely Psalm lvii. 7–11, and lx. 6–12, are here brought together *without any connection whatever;* and the changes occurring, in only a few words, are so unimportant that *neither occasion nor purpose can be discovered* in this combination and conformation. Least of all is a poet like David to be held guilty of combining in such a manner two pieces taken out of their connection."— *Lange's Commentary.*

Delitzsch agrees with Moll, and so does Perowne. Alexander and Hengstenberg unite, however, in believing the origin of these psalms to be Davidic; but "the former view," says the American editor of Moll, "seems to be the most favored at present."

A truer reverence for Scripture would surely restrain the rashness of such criticisms. Granted that a psalm made by bringing together two ends of previous ones—or with scissors and paste, as it might be urged—may seem strange enough for inspiration; yet to say that "neither occasion nor purpose can be discovered in this combination" is a challenge of the perfection of Scripture

2 (5, 6): Appeal for deliverance.
(i.) God to show Himself supreme.
(ii.) and save His beloved.

3 (7-9): Possession of the land anticipated.
(i.) from the divine promise.
(ii.) the allied tribes.
(iii.) the full inheritance.

4 (10-13): Weakness waiting upon God.
(i.) the strength to be met.
(ii.) the breach that has existed.
(iii.) shut up to God.
(iv.) the experience looked for.

Be thou [e]exalted above the heavens, O God!
and thy glory over all the [f]earth.
That thy [g]beloved ones may be delivered,
save with thy [h]right hand and answer me.

God hath spoken in his [i]holiness:
I will [j]exult; I will [k]divide [l]Shechem,
and mete out the [m]valley of Succoth.
[n]Gilead is mine, [o]Manasseh is mine;
[p]Ephraim also is the strength of my head;
[q]Judah is my ruler.
[r]Moab is my wash-pot;
upon [s]Edom I cast my shoe;
over [t]Philistia I shout aloud.

Who will bring me into the [u]strong city?
who will lead me into Edom?
[Wilt] not [thou], O God, who [v]didst cast us off?
and didst not go forth, O God, with our hosts?
Give us [w]help out of strait;
for [z]vain is help of man.
Through God we shall do [y]valiantly,
and *he* shall [z]tread down our oppressors.

e Ps. 8. 1. Ps. 113. 4.
f Nu. 14. 21. Is. 6. 2. Ps. 72. 19.
g Ps. 60. 5-12 (ref'es). Deut. 33. 12. Ps. 127. 2.
h Ps. 44. 3. Ps. 118. 15, 16.
i *cf.* Am. 4. 2.
j Zeph. 3. 17. Is. 62. 5. Is. 65. 19.
k Josh. 14. 5.
l *cf.* Josh. 20. 7. *cf.* Josh. 24. 25.
m *cf.* 1 Ki. 7. 46.
n *cf.* 2 Ki. 15. 29.
o *cf.* 2 Chr. 15. 9.
p *cf.* Hos. 14. 8.
q Ps. 76. 1.
r Ezek. 25. 8-11.
s Ezek. 25. 12-14.
t Ezek. 25. 15-17.

u Obad. 3; *cf.* Num. 13. 28. *v* Ps. 44. 9; Ps. 74. 1; *cf.* Jer. 30. 11. *w* Ps. 121. 1, 2; Ps. 124. 8; Ps. 12. 1. *x* *cf.* Is. 30. 1-7 with Is. 45. 24; *cf.* Jer. 17. 5-8. *y* *cf.* Rom. 8. 37. *z* *cf.* Is. 63. 6.

which can only speak the audacious incompetence of the one who utters it. It is easy, on the other hand, to show that there *is* purpose: for it is just the character of a Deuteronomic book, such as this is, to give us, as Deuteronomy itself does, the way and the end,—the governmental way of God by which His end is reached; the end, therefore, which reveals the way. Now the previous psalm has given us, without any possible question, the ways of God with men, and that as shown especially in the case of Israel: what more simple than that, in the present one, we should have the *end* of His way with them? And for this—and to make it definitely plain to us what is intended—*the ends of two previous psalms, cut off from the exercise and trials with which these are connected, should be joined together?* The purpose which the commentator denies is, in fact, here transparent; and the unbelieving attack upon the perfection of the Word is an arrow turned back into the face of him that has discharged it.

Now for the "connection" between these two ends. Certainly the psalm makes, as we find it here, a very complete whole; and the two portions join together in the second division of it without a seam. The first division gives us Israel's praise as leading the incoming praise of the whole earth. The second appeals, therefore, that God may manifest His supremacy over the earth, for Israel's deliverance. The after-divisions show the nation, as in answer to this prayer, upon the threshold of full blessing. There is no lack of unity or completeness here.

The minor changes in the psalm here, as compared with the two psalms from which it is divided, we may not have skill to interpret or appreciate: for the *true* "higher criticism" is as feeble with us as that which is falsely called so is vigorous and strong; and these things naturally go together. For the interpretation of the psalm in detail it is sufficient to refer to the notes elsewhere (pp. 223, 224; 230–234.)

Sec. 2.

The second section gives us, in two psalms which are in evident and striking contrast with one another, first, Christ in His humiliation hated and rejected of

SECTION 2. (Ps. cix., cx.)

Christ in humiliation and rejection owned of God.

Ps. cix.

1 (1-5): The appeal of righteousness.
(i.) to God.
(ii.) against the false tongue of man.
(iii.) compassing round.
(iv.) their way and mine.
(v.) requital.

[1]PSALM CIX.

Enmity self-caused.

To the chief musician, a psalm of David.

O God of my praise, be not [a]silent!
For a wicked mouth, and a [b]deceitful mouth have they opened against me;
they have spoken against me with a false tongue.
And with words of [c]hatred have they compassed me;
and they fight against me [d]without cause.
In return for my [e]love, they are mine adversaries;
and *I* [am all] [f]prayer.
And they have requited me [g]evil for good,
and hatred for my love.

a Ps. 28. 1. Ps. 35. 22.
b *cf.* Ps. 10. 7. *cf.* Ps. 36. 3. *cf.* Matt. 26. 48, 49.
c Ps. 25. 19. *cf.* Jno. 7. 7.
d Ps. 35. 7. Ps. 69. 4. Jno. 15. 25. *cf.* Jno. 10. 32.
e *cf.* 1Jno. 4. 10 with Jno. 19. 6.
f *cf.* Matt. 26. 39. *cf.* Lk. 23. 33, 34.
g Ps. 35. 12. Ps. 38. 20. Jer. 18. 20.

man, and then His acceptance of God,—owned in the double character of King and Priest. Both parts are needed to give God's way as to the perfect Man, who (according to the divine principle in blessing, but which in Him who is what He is, fulfills itself so marvelously) humbles Himself and is exalted.

PSALM CIX.

On the other hand, men His adversaries display the awful reality of evil which is remediless because it rejects the only remedy. Of the imprecatory psalms, this is the strongest, being indeed a glimpse into the mouth of hell. And this I say in full view of the fact that it is *not* hell that is before us, but (according to the manner of the Old Testament) rather the government of God on earth: to which the law, imbedded in a covenant with a nation in the flesh, naturally appealed.

Yet it is in Gehenna, according to the import of that word (see Josh. xv. 8, *notes*), the self-caused doom to which, without other cause, men doom themselves. So is the enmity here self-caused, the hatred of good as good, brought to its highest thus by that which is good in its fullest display. For such it is not an arbitrary appointment that all things should in result declare themselves against them. It is only the declaration of the righteousness inherent in the framework of things; that is, that it is framed by the God of righteousness. So that, again, we must not shrink when we hear it affirmed by God that it is His judgment, or when it is looked for and besought by men suffering on earth, the cry of the widow, as the Lord Himself puts it, which must vex even the unjust judge to answer at last, and which God recognizes as the cry of His elect, and which, though He bear long, He will at length fully respond to.

Here the application of the eighth verse by the apostle to Judas (Acts i. 20), and no less the connection with the following psalm, show us that it is the voice of the Prince of martyrs that is to be heard, though it may well be not alone, but identified with the cry which from Abel runs throughout all history. Nor is this contrary to the grace which failed not from His lips while hope was left, but which He always declared had its limit, and if refused would only avail to increase men's condemnation. Of Judas He Himself declared: "good were it for that man if he had not been born." And while this application may in no wise be the whole, it shows at least sufficiently the character of that limit which there surely is. But we shall gain clearer understanding by the examination of the psalm.

1. The appeal is to God to open *His* mouth. Men's mouths are opened wide; but only deceit and hatred are poured out! For himself, he only pours out his heart to God. It is for good they are requiting evil,—enmity for love.

2 (6-15): Be an adversary to him.
a (6-8): in person.
(i.) his ruler.
(ii.) sentence againt him.
(iii.)his office.
b (9-15): relations.
(i.) through connections strictly personal.
(ii.) dependent on others.
(iii.) his possessions.
(iv.) to man generally.
(v.) requital.
(vi.) disciplinary ways.
(vii.) complete end.

Appoint over him a [h]wicked one,
and let an adversary* stand at his right hand.
When he is judged, let him go forth [i]guilty,
and let his [j]prayer be sin.
Let his [k]days be few;
his [l]office let another take.
Let his [m]children be fatherless,
and his wife a widow.
Let his children wander about and [n]beg,
and seek, away from their desolate places.
Let the usurer [o]cast a net over all that he hath,
and let strangers despoil his labor.
Let him have [p]none to extend mercy to him,
and let there be none to show favor to his orphans.
Let his [q]posterity be cut off:
in the generation following let their name be [r]blotted out.
Let the [s]iniquity of his fathers be remembered before Jehovah:
and let not his mother's sin be blotted out.
Let them be continually before Jehovah,
that he may [t]cut off the memory of them from the earth.

h *cf.* 2 Thes. 2. 8–10. *cf.* Is.8.5–8. *cf.* Rom. 1. 28.
i *cf.* Matt.26. 24, 25. *cf.* Matt.27. 3, 4.
j Prov.28.9.
k Ps. 55. 23. Prov.10.27.
l Acts 1. 20.
m *cf.* Ex.20. 5. *cf.* Ex. 22. 24.
n *cf.* 1 Sam. 2. 36. *ctr.* Ps. 37. 25. Ps. 59. 15.
o *cf.* Job 18. 8, 9.
p *cf.* Matt. 27. 4.
q Ps. 21. 10. *cf.* 1 Ki. 13. 34.
r Prov.10.7. *ctr.* Prov. 17. 6.
s Ex. 34. 7. Neh. 4. 5. *cf.* Is. 14.20, 21. *cf.* Matt.23. 35.

*Satan. t Job 18. 17; Ps. 34. 16; Prov. 2. 22.

Causeless enmity is, of course, enmity that has its cause only in the condition of heart from which it arises, and whose state it shows. But this is not merely such; it is love that awakens it; it is moral antagonism to that which is good and lovely; it is corruption such as the sun that invigorates the living breeds in the dead. And this is death, and naturally hopeless, as death is: for only from that which is good can good be looked for, and yet here the good itself produces but evil. All means, therefore, fail; hope fails; if it be fully proved, judgment alone can be invoked; and the next ten verses are accordingly a cry for judgment.

2. The judgment is first personal. He is to be put into the hands of a wicked one; and at his right hand, when he would put it forth for aid, he is to find an adversary. This is only congruous dealing, finding others toward him just what he had been to them. Then, when he is judged, there can be no plea made for one who is beyond the reach of hope. His prayer for himself is only a struggle against the righteous government of God, and not repentance or submission: thus it may well be treated as sin. His sentence is to death, not long delayed; and his office passes over to another.

It is not here that conscience can make any plausible objection. When we turn to the relation of his sin to others there come in many; and to remove them the light must be brought in from elsewhere. But God has provided for it, and we may be sure that there can be no contradiction between His nature and His acts.

He has Himself assured us that He "visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation," but then it is added as most necessary guarding of what would be otherwise misconstrued. "*of them that hate Me*"; and elsewhere the proverb which Israel had taken up from just such misconstruction is reprobated most emphatically by the Lord: "the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." (Ezek. xviii.) He not only says, but swears, that they shall have no occasion to use such a proverb; that the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, nor the father bear the in-

3 (16-20): The moral reason.
(i.) congruous penalty.
(ii.) his love of cursing.
(iii.) full inward realization.
(iv.) outwardly.
(v.) requital.

Because he remembered not to show kindness,
but [u]persecuted the poor and needy man,
and the smitten in heart, to put him to death.
Yea, he loved [v]cursing: so let it come to him;
and he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him.
And he clothed himself with cursing as his garment:
so let it [w]come into his inward parts like water,
and like oil into his bones.
Let it be unto him as the [x]robe he weareth,
and for the belt wherewith continually he girdeth himself.
Let this be the [y]wages of mine adversaries from Jehovah,
and of those that speak evil against my soul.

4 (21-25): Poor and needy.
(i.) before Jehovah the Lord.
(ii.) in humiliation.
(iii.) inward consciousness (?)
(iv.) flesh wasting away.
(v.) a byword.

But do *thou* with me, Jehovah, Lord, for thy [z]name's sake:
because thy loving-kindness is good, deliver me!
For *I* am [a]poor and needy:
and my heart is [b]pierced within me.
Like the [c]shadow as it lengtheneth, I am passing away:
I am shaken off like the locust.
My knees fail through [d]fasting,
and my flesh [e]wasteth away from [its] fatness.
And I am become a [f]reproach to them:
they that see me [g]shake their head.

5 (26-31): But be Thou with me!
(i.) Jehovah, my God.
(ii.) bear witness.
(iii.) manifest Thyself.

Help me, Jehovah, my God:
save me, according to thy [h]loving-kindness!
And let them know that this is [i]thy hand:
thou, Jehovah, hast done it.
Let them curse, but [j]bless thou!
when they rise up, let them be [k]ashamed, but let thy servant be glad.

u Ps. 69. 26. Ps. 119. 86.
v *cf.* 2 Sam. 16. 9-12. Ps. 7. 16.
w *cf.* Nu. 5. 21, 22. *cf.* Hab. 3. 16.
x *ctr.* Is. 61. 3, 10. *ctr.* Zech. 3. 3-5.
y *cf.* Gal. 6. 7. Is. 3. 11.
z Ps. 143. 11, 12.
a Ps. 40. 17. *cf.* Ps. 72. 4.
b *cf.* Ps. 69. 20.
c *cf.* Ps. 102. 11. Ps. 144. 4.
d *cf.* Ps. 35. 13. *cf.* Ps. 69. 10.
e *cf.* Ps. 22. 17.
f *cf.* Ps. 22. 6, 7. *cf.* Is. 53. 3.
g *cf.* Matt. 27. 39.
h *cf.* Ps. 21. 7. *cf.* Is. 55. 3.
i *cf.* Ps. 69. 26. *cf.* Ps. 22. 31.
j *cf.* Ps. 20. 1-4. *cf.* Ps. 45. 2.
k Ps. 70. 2. Ps. 71. 13.

iquity of the son; that the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him; while the repentance of any shall avert his doom.

On the other hand, it is familiar to us all that the character of the father may have much to do with the temporal condition of the children; and that thus the warp and woof of human history proclaim the far-reaching consequences of sin. And all this is a witness from God as to it that could not be silenced without the worst results upon men at large. If we take, then, these guides and guards on either hand, we shall avoid serious mistake as to the moral character of what we have in this psalm, with all its solemn imprecations of judgment on the transgressor. So far as this affects his children it is overruled for blessing to them, as surely as they heed the lesson; nor can sin be bound upon any, apart from the consent of their own character. And this the 14th verse here definitely shows: for the very prayer that the iniquity of his fathers may be remembered before Jehovah is grounded upon his own character in this way (ver. 16).

3. Accordingly, the moral reason is given in the third division, where the equal government of God is clearly seen; and then —

4. The need and poverty which appeal to God, and for which He is besought

(iv.) outward proof.
(v.) the return of praise.

Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame,
and cover themselves with shame as with a [l]robe.
I will give [m]thanks to Jehovah with my mouth, at large:
yea, among the [n]multitude will I praise him.
For he standeth at the [o]right hand of the needy,
to save [him] from those that judge his soul.

(vi.) the control of evil.

Ps. cx.

[z]PSALM CX.

The confirmation of the King-Priest.

A psalm of David.

1 (1-3): Jehovah's King.
(i.) upon the Father's throne.
(ii.) sustained in spite of enemies.
(iii.) a people of saints from the womb of the dawn.

[p]JEHOVAH said unto [q]my Lord:
[r]Sit thou at my right hand,
until I set thy [s]foes a footstool for thy feet.
Jehovah shall send the [t]rod of thy power out of Zion:
rule thou in the [u]midst of thine enemies.
Thy people shall be of [v]ready heart in the day of thy might:
in the [w]beauties of holiness, from the womb of the [z]dawning,
for thee the [y]dew of thy youth.

l vers. 18,19. *m* Ps. 71.22-24. *n cf.* Ps. 22. 25. Ps. 111. 1. *o* Ps. 16. 8. *ctr.* ver. 6. *p* Matt. 22. 42-45. Mk. 12. 35-37. Lk. 20. 41-44. Acts 2. 34, 35. *q cf.* Rev. 5. 5. *cf.* Rev. 22. 16. *cf.* Is. 11. 1, 10. *r* Heb. 1. 3, 13. Heb. 8. 1. Eph. 1. 20. *cf.* Ps. 2. 6. *s cf.* Heb. 2. 7-9 with 1 Cor. 15. 25. *t cf.* Ps. 50. 2. *cf.* Ps. 2. 8, 9. *u* Ps. 18. 43-45. *v cf.* Ex. 35. 21, 29; *cf.* 1 Chr. 29. 6, 9, 14, 17; *cf.* Jer. 31. 31-34. *w* Ps. 27. 4; Ps. 29. 2; Ps. 96. 6; *ctr.* Is. 53. 2. *x cf.* Ps. 22, title; *cf.* 2 Sa. 23. 4. *y cf.* Ps. 22. 31; *cf.* Ps. 45. 16; *cf.* Is. 26. 19.

to come in, according to His Name and title over all, and deliver. There is, all through, no thought of suffering from God, nor therefore of atonement: nothing that cannot be applied, in measure, to His people as to Christ Himself; and there is little need of comment as to it.

5. A final appeal to God to be with him, and give convincing proof that He is so, closes the psalm. If they curse, may God bless; and may the adversaries be clothed with shame. Then will he give thanks to Him with his mouth, and praise Him amid the multitude: for He standeth at the right hand of the needy, —where the outstretched hand can also find Him,—to save him from those that judge his soul.

Psalm CX.

The second psalm here is the answer of Jehovah to this humbled One, establishing Him as King and Priest together, after the order of Melchizedek, and with a prophecy of the revival of Israel under Him, and the subjection of enemies. There are but seven verses, and which follow the general septenary pattern of 4 (3+1)+3; except that these portions seem to be more emphasized than usual, so as to divide the whole into three equal parts of equal value.

1. The first three verses speak of Jehovah's King. But He is not yet actually enthroned. Like David himself, but whose Lord He really is, He has His time of rejection and even banishment. But unlike David, and completely in opposition to the thought of a reference in it to the Israelitish throne as the "throne of Jehovah" (1 Chr. xxix. 23), it is precisely in this time of His rejection that He sits at the right hand of Jehovah. It is an Old Testament hint which the New Testament clearly unfolds for us. The place is heavenly, not earthly: "He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." (Mk. xvi. 19). It is further developed by the Lord Himself in His address to Laodicea (Rev. iii. 21), where, distinguishing it from the human throne which He will by and by take, and which He will share with others, He speaks of having overcome, and sitting down with His Father upon *His* throne.

This defines for us the Christian interval in which we are, and which we must not expect to find more than hinted at in the Old Testament scriptures.

2 (4): The confirmation.

3 (5-7): The day of manifestation.
(i.) the Lord revealed.
(ii.) the judgment.
(iii.) the secret of success.

Jehovah hath [z]sworn and will not repent:
thou art a [a]priest for ever,
after the order of [b]Melchizedek.

The Lord [is] at thy [c]right hand:
he smiteth through [d]kings in the [e]day of his anger.
He shall [f]judge among the nations:
he shall fill [the places] with [g]dead bodies;
he shall [h]smite the head over a wide country.
He shall [i]drink of the brook in the way:
therefore shall he [j]lift up the head.

z Heb. 7.21.
a *cf.* Zech.6. 13. *cf.* Heb. 10. 11, 12, 21.
b *cf.* Heb. 5. 6. *cf.* Heb. 6. 20. *cf.* Heb. 7. 1-28. *cf.* Heb. 8. 1-6.
c *cf.* Ps. 109. 31. *cf.* Ps. 16.8.
d Ps. 2. 2; Ps. 48. 4; Ps. 68. 12; Is. 24. 21.
e *cf.* ver. 3; *cf.* Ps. 2. 8-12; *cf.* Is. 13. 6-9.
f Ps. 96. 13; *cf.* Ps. 9. 15-20.
g *cf.* Ps. 45. 3-5; *cf.* Is. 63. 1-6; *cf.* Is. 66. 15, 16, 23, 24.
h Ps. 68. 21; Hab. 3. 13.
i *cf.* Judg. 7. 5, 6; *cf.* Jno. 4. 7, 31-34.
j *cf.* Phil. 2. 8-11.

Jehovah acts in due time for His King, who waits in entire dependence upon Him for the day in which His enemies are to be made His footstool. Then Jehovah will send the rod of Messiah's power out of Zion, the seat of His kingdom; setting Him there in the midst of a hostile world, then to be quickly reduced to subjection. And as when He comes from heaven His heavenly people exchange their bridal festivities for militant array, and come with Him,—so now that He is in Zion He gathers Israel first around Himself. It is the day of His might, and they are now, as they were not hitherto, all of ready heart. They are newborn children of the dawning day, in the beauties of holiness every one; and for Christ, in the tender sympathy (as I take it) which unites Him to His people, like the dew of His own youth. As Paul could say, "Now I live, if ye stand fast in the Lord," so the immortal Life, as it were, renews itself in the vigor of His people.

2. And this leads naturally to another view of the Person addressed, besides that of King. He is the King-*Priest*, the One who goes in to God in man's behalf, and presents for him the acceptable sacrifice. Here again God bears witness to Him, and here indeed all the fullness of the divine heart comes out. He knows the importance of this for us; He knows, too, how slow and unbelieving we are in the reception of His grace. Hence He not only speaks,—He *swears:* "Jehovah has *sworn*, and will not repent: Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."

The apostle has given us the full significance of this, and from the Christian side, in the epistle to the Hebrews. Here is not the place for any proper investigation of it. It is one of many proofs that for Israel also the predicted blessing could not come through the Levitical rites or priesthood, instituted by the law, but through a glorious Person ordained to an eternal priesthood. The sacrifice—which a priest implies—is not, however, brought before us here. But we see that the King needed for them cannot be only King,—that He cannot commit the work of atonement to other hands than His own. Only by atonement can He be true "King of righteousness" (Melchizedek) and bless the children of Abraham as he to whom Abraham had given tithes had blessed the father.

3. Priestly *work* is not otherwise before us in this psalm, while the day of wrath it is that is earnestly pressed. The fifth and sixth verses do not seem to be the action of the King Himself, but of God as the Sovereign Lord (*Adonai*) in His behalf, according to the character of the psalm as a whole. It is God who sets His foes as a footstool for His feet; which does not lose sight any more than this does of His own activity. But the heavenly and earthly thrones are now and henceforth in complete concord; and here, throughout, the ways are the ways of God, with which in the last verse once more the Conqueror is shown to be in full accord.

Thus "the Lord is at Thy right hand" would not be the repetition of the thought in the first verse, but the converse; and the divine anger is at the rejection of the Object of divine delight. The head over a wide country would seem

SECTION 3. (Ps. cxi.-cxiii.)

Hallelujah!

Ps. cxi.

[1]PSALM CXI.

Jehovah!

[k]HALLELUJAH!

(*Aleph*) I will give thanks to Jehovah with the [l]whole heart,

(*Beth*) in secret converse of the upright and in the [m]assembly.

(*Gimel*) Great are Jehovah's [n]works,

(*Daleth*) sought out of all that [o]delight in them.

1 (1, 2): The whole heart.
a (1.) to Jehovah.
b (2): the testimony sustaining this.

k Ps. 112. 1. Ps. 113. 1.
l Ps. 9. 1. *cf.* Ps. 119. 2, 34, 58.
m Ps. 35. 18. Ps. 149. 1.
n Ps. 104. 24. Ps. 8. 3, 4. Rev. 15. 3.
o cf. 1 Ki. 4. 33. *cf.* Job chs. 38-41. *cf.* Rom. 1. 20. *cf.* Acts 14. 15-17.

to be Gog (Ezek. xxxviii.), as has been often noticed, inasmuch as it is not the descent from heaven that is in view, as in Rev. xix, but the rod going forth from Zion.

The last verse shows us, in figurative language, the secret of the King's success. He drinks of the brook in the way, taking Himself the divine refreshment, the stream of living water, of which, though provided for all, the kings of the earth have so little availed themselves. Thus is He, as having the mind of the Spirit, in full unhindered fellowship with the ways of God,— Himself, indeed, being as we know the centre of them.

Sec. 3.

The next and closing section is composed of three psalms, each marked at the beginning, and the final one at the end also, with a Hallelujah. Accordingly they are, throughout, filled with Jehovah's praise: the first, celebrating Him as known in His works and ways; the second, the blessing of those that fear Him; the third, the glory of His Name as filling heaven and earth. From their largeness these psalms are difficult to summarize, as may be imagined: who can tell out His praise? The first two have a difficulty also of another nature in their alphabetic structure, which is most regular, and in both perfectly alike, the whole twenty-two letters being contained within the compass of ten verses. Of the numerous divisions resulting from this, I have only been able to characterize as far as the verses. Indeed I have doubted if the letters are to be taken as real divisions here, or had another meaning. This I must leave for any who may follow me in this direction to decide; but as I have said elsewhere (p. 42) "it is surely natural to see in the alphabetic arrangement a symbol of *order impressed by a governing mind.* A numerical structure by itself expresses this; and an alphabetic one, making use of all the elements of human speech, seems as if it were indeed intended to make that order vocal." Here the perfect regularity and exact correspondence in the two psalms emphasize this thought, which is in thorough harmony with their being devoted entirely to Jehovah's praise. This is indeed the only harmony that is really that: all else is discord; and the coming day will bring forth from human history as well as nature this secret harmony, which it is a joy to think that man's lips shall make vocal. This may be a sufficient meaning for the alphabetic structure here.

PSALM CXI.

1. The one hundred and eleventh psalm, then, celebrates Jehovah, as seen in His works and ways; the whole heart united in thanksgiving, and this poured out in the secret converse of the upright where hearts are freest, and in the public assembly. The theme is a large—aye, an unending one: for "great are Jehovah's works, and sought out by all that delight in them;" or perhaps, as Delitzsch takes it,—"worthy of being sought out in all their aims," or "purposes."

(*He*) His work is [p] honor and majesty,
(*Vau*) yea, his righteousness [q] standeth for aye.
(*Zayin*) He hath made his [r] wonderful works to be remembered:
(*Cheth*) [s] gracious and merciful is Jehovah.
(*Teth*) The prey hath he given to them that [t] fear him:
(*Jod*) he remembereth his [u] covenant for ever.
(*Caph*) The [v] living power of his doings he declareth to his people,
(*Lamed*) in giving them the [w] inheritance of the nations.
(*Mem*) The works of his hands are [x] truth and judgment:
(*Nun*) all his appointments are [y] sure;
(*Sameech*) Maintained for [z] aye—for ever,
(*Ayin*) [as] done in truth and [a] uprightness.
(*Pe*) He hath sent [b] redemption for his people:
(*Tzaddi*) he hath [c] commanded his covenant for ever:
(*Koph*) [d] holy and reverend is his Name.
(*Resh*) The [e] fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom:
(*Schin*) a good [f] understanding have all that do [accordingly]:
(*Tau*) his [g] praise endureth for ever.

2 (3, 4): His twofold character.
a (3): abiding righteousness.
b (4): borne witness to in love.
3 (5, 6): The fulfillment of the inheritance.
a (5): according to the covenant of promise.
b (6): declaring His doings.
4 (7, 8): Tested.
a (7): by truth and stability.
b (8): His appointments are sustained.
5 (9, 10): Man with God.
a (9): in grace on God's part;
b (10): humility on man's.

p Ps. 19. 1. Ps. 145. 4, 5.
q Ps. 119. 142. Is. 51. 6–8.
r Ps. 143. 5.
s Ps. 116. 5. Is. 30. 18. *cf.* Titus. 2. 11–14.
t Ps. 34. 8–10. *cf.* Is. 33. 23.
u *cf.* Gen. 9. 15. *cf.* Lev. 26. 42, 45. *cf.* Ezek. 16. 60–63.
v Ps. 147. 5.
w *cf.* Ex. 15. 14–17. Ps. 44. 2. Ps. 80. 8–11. *cf.* Is. 60. 1–10.
x Ps. 145. 17. Hos. 14. 9. Rev. 16. 7.
y Ps. 19. 7. Ps. 93. 5.
z Ps. 119. 89. 1 Pet. 1. 25. Deut. 7. 9.
a Ps. 19. 9. Ps. 92. 15.
b *cf.* Ex. 8. 23. Is. 50. 2. *cf.* Lk. 1. 68.
c Deut. 28. 8. Ps. 133. 3.
d Lk. 1. 49. Ps. 99. 5.
e Job. 28. 28. Prov. 1. 7.
f Jer. 9. 23. 24; *cf.* Dan. 12. 3, 10.
g Ps. 113. 2.

2. Now we find His character as told out in these: essentially righteousness and tender mercy; or light and love, as the New Testament unites with the Old to declare Him. "His work is honorable and with majesty;" and this is the reason of it, that in it all there is enduring, everlasting righteousness: "His righteousness standeth for aye." This is the one side; but there is another: for He has provided for the remembrance of His wonderful works; and in this His tender care for His creatures has shone out, that they might have the joy and fruitful consequences of such knowledge: "gracious and merciful is Jehovah."

3. But Israel is in the front, the Old Testament example in which these characters of His have been displayed, a people His by a covenant which He never forgets. "The *prey* has He given to them that fear Him: He remembereth His covenant for ever. The living power of His doings He declareth to His people, in giving them the inheritance of the nations." Here it is plain why it is, not "meat" but "the prey" in the first line; for Israel's inheritance has to be gained by conquest, as the last psalm has again reminded us; and spite of the long time in which the nations have had possession of the covenanted land, the word of God which has secured it to them, shows the "living power" or "vitality" of His doings through those years in which so long it has lain dormant. Now they are put in possession; and thus, as tested by the event, they can say:—

4. "The works of His hands are truth and judgment: all His appointments are sure. Maintained for aye—for ever, as done in truth and uprightness."

5. Now all has come out fully,—His faithfulness to His covenant; the manifestation of His Name. His covenant will be seen at last as only grace, in which alone can any stable relationship between God and man be found. While on man's part God is recognized in a holy fear which is the "beginning of wisdom," the secret of that "good understanding" which the "knowledge of the holy" is. The praise of it will indeed be eternal.

Ps. cxii.

[2] PSALM CXII.

Praise for the security of those that fear Him.

[h] HALLELUJAH!

(*Aleph*) [i] Happy is the man that feareth Jehovah;
(*Beth*) that [j] delighteth greatly in his commandments.
(*Gimel*) His [k] seed shall be mighty in the earth:
(*Daleth*) the [l] generation of the upright is blessed.

(*He*) [m] Wealth and riches [shall be] in his house:
(*Vau*) and his righteousness [n] endureth for ever.
(*Zayin*) For the upright there ariseth [o] light in the darkness:
(*Cheth*) [he is] [p] gracious and merciful and righteous.

(*Teth*) Well is it with the man that is gracious and [q] lendeth:
(*Jod*) he shall sustain his affairs by [r] judgment.
(*Caph*) For he shall not be [s] moved for ever:
(*Lamed*) the righteous shall be in everlasting [t] remembrance.

(*Mem*) He shall not be afraid of an [u] evil report:
(*Nun*) his heart is [v] fixed, trusting in Jehovah.
(*Samech*) His heart is sustained, he shall not [w] fear,
(*Ayin*) until he [x] see [what he looketh for] on his adversaries.

1 (1, 2): The upright. *a* (1): *obedient* fear. *b* (2): the way of increase.

2 (3, 4): His twofold character. *a* (3): righteousness. *b* (4): love.

3 (5, 6): Fenced round. *a* (5): by righteousness. *b* (6): his security.

4 (7, 8): In view of frailty. *a* (7): his heart firm. *b* (8): and kept firm.

h Ps. 111. 1. Ps. 113. 1.
i Ps. 115. 13. Ps. 128. 1.
j Ps. 1. 2. Ps. 119. 16, 35, 47, 92.
k Ps. 25. 13. Ps. 127. 5.
l *ctr.* Ps. 109. 13. *cf.* Ezek. 37. 25-28.
m Prov. 3. 16. Prov. 8. 18. Is. 60. 17.
n vers. 6, 9. Ps. 37. 28, 29.
o Is. 50. 10, 11. Job. 11. 16, 17. Ps. 97. 11. *cf.* Mal. 4. 2.
p *cf.* Ps. 109. 4, 5. 1 Pet. 3. 8.
q Luke 6. 34, 35. *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 17. Deut. 15. 7, 8.
r *cf.* Prov. 3. 27-29. *cf.* Is. 11. 4, 5.
s *cf.* Ps. 15. 5 with Ps. 16. 8. *cf.* Luke. 6. 47-49.
t Prov. 10. 7. *ctr.* Ps. 9. 5, 6.
u *cf.* Ps. 91. 3-8.

cf. 2 Thess. 2. 1, 2; *ctr.* Prov. 28. 1. *v* Ps. 108. 1; *ctr.* Ps. 78. 37. *w* Prov. 1. 33; Is. 12. 2. *x* Ps. 59. 10; Ps. 92. 11.

PSALM CXII.

In the last verse the key-note of the present psalm is struck, in which we have in fact the praise of such wisdom. It is a psalm of praise for the security and blessing of those who fear Jehovah; and the alphabetic structure may remind us of the similar one in the twenty-fifth, but here (as not there) perfect. As soon as the soul is turned to God, things begin to get the impress of divine order; and while from the side of human experience (as in the twenty-fifth) this is yet imperfect, from the divine side (as here) it is not so: the structure is the exact reflection of the truth contained.

In the character of the blessing the psalm is Jewish, of course; and we have to make large allowance for this in any Christian application.

1. We have first the description of the man that fears Jehovah. His fear is a fruitful fear and not a slavish one: he has great delight in the commandments in which he walks. "His seed shall be mighty *in the earth*,"—the sphere of blessing in the Old Testament,—"the generation of the upright is blessed."

2. Next, as in the last psalm the two-fold character of light and love is seen in Jehovah, so here this is seen in the one who walks in His way. "Wealth and riches shall be in his house; and his righteousness endureth for ever." Amid a dark world light arises for the upright; and the only upright one is he that is "gracious and merciful" as well as "righteous." Indeed our Lord has fully shown us in the parable of the thankless servant (Matt. xix.) that for those who are debtors to mercy not to show it is not even *righteous*.

3. We now see how he is fenced about and cared for: "Well is it with the man that is gracious and lendeth: he shall sustain his affairs by judgment"—not in the judgment which is coming at the hands of God, (as some interpret,)

5 (9, 10): Divine government.
a (9): as to the righteous.
b (10): the destruction of the wicked.

(*Pe*) He hath [y]scattered abroad, he hath given to the needy,
(*Tzaddi*) his righteousness [z]endureth for aye;
(*Koph*) his horn shall be [a]exalted with honor.
(*Resh*) The wicked shall [b]see [it] and be vexed:
(*Schin*) he shall gnash with his teeth and [c]melt away;
(*Tau*) the desire of the wicked shall [d]perish.

y 2 Cor. 9. 9. Prov. 11. 24.
z vers. 3, 6. *cf.* Is. 58. 6–12.
a Ps. 75. 10. Ps. 89. 17. Ps. 148. 14.
b *cf.* Lk. 13. 28. Ps. 107. 42.
c Ps. 58. 7, 8. Ps. 18. 45. Ps. 37. 36.
d Job 8. 13. Job 11. 20. Prov. 11. 7.

Ps. cxiii.

1 (1-3): "One Jehovah, and His name one."
(i.) the call for worship.
(ii.) the answer of praise.
(iii.) the full praise to be.

2 (4-6): His relation to His creatures.
(i.) Supreme!
(ii.) who can compare?
(iii.) to whom all is manifest.

[3]PSALM CXIII.

The glory of Jehovah's Name.

[c]HALLELUJAH!
Praise, ye [f]servants of Jehovah,—
Praise ye Jehovah's name!
Blessed be Jehovah's name,
[g]from this time even for ever.
From the [h]rising of the sun to the going down of it,
Jehovah's Name shall be praised.

Jehovah is high [i]above all nations:
His glory is over the [j]heavens.
Who is [k]like Jehovah our God,
who hath placed his [l]dwelling on high?
Who [m]stoopeth down to see
[what is] in the heavens and on the earth?

e Ps. 111. 1. Ps. 112. 1. ver. 9.
f Ps. 134. 1. Ps. 135. 1–3. *cf.* 1 Chr. 25. 1–7.
g *cf.* Rev. 4. 8. Ps. 115. 18.
h Is. 59. 19. Mal. 1. 11. *cf.* Is. 6. 3 with Ps. 72. 8, 19.
i Ps. 83. 18. Ps. 99. 2. Ps. 47. 9.
j Ps. 8. 1. Ps. 57. 5.
k Ex. 15. 11. Jer. 6. 7. Is. 40. 25, 26.
l Ps. 115. 16. Is. 57. 15.
m Ps. 138. 6; *cf.* 2 Chr. 6. 18; Job 4. 18; Job 15. 15.

but by the judgment which he himself practises. "For he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance"—remembered by God Himself, and so kept unmoved.

4. Yet he is in a world where things do not show stability; but "he shall not be afraid of an evil report"—of bad news; because he has found stability in God: "his heart is firm, trusting in Jehovah," the Unchangeable. This very trust too is sustained of God, until he see what he looks for as to his adversaries.

5. The principles of divine government, both as to the righteous and the wicked, are seen in the closing verses.

Psalm CXIII.

1. And now the third Hallelujah celebrates Jehovah's Name, now to be one, according to the testimony of the prophet, over all the earth. All servants of Jehovah are exhorted to praise it: to show thus that their obedience springs out of joyful adoration; the only service which can have value for Him. And the answer rings out joyfully: "Blessed be Jehovah's Name! from this time even for ever." The full worship, too, is seen coming in: "from the rising of the sun to the going down of it, Jehovah's Name shall be praised."

2. Well may it be! for the whole scene of this praise is His creation. "He is high above all nations:" yea, "Jehovah's glory is above the heavens." The Incomparable One! He has placed His dwelling on high; but He sees, and with tender interest, all that is in heaven and on earth. This leads to the next verse in which we see how deep this interest goes, and how wonderful are the results of it.

3. For He is Abraham's God, the God of resurrection: this still told in Old Testament style, and to which the Christian revelation only has given its full glory. Yet the features of it can be still discerned and have been from the beginning. For He "raiseth the exhausted from the dust; He lifteth up the needy from the dunghill:" "an emblem of the deepest poverty and desertion;

3 (7-9): The God of resurrection.
(i.) power in grace.
(ii.) changed relations.
(iii.) birth from the barren.

Who [n]raiseth the exhausted from the dust;
he lifteth up the needy from the dunghill;
To set him with [o]nobles—
with the nobles of his people.
He maketh the [p]barren to keep house,
a joyful mother of sons.
[q]Hallelujah!

n 1 Sa. 2. 8. *cf.* Ps. 78. 70, 71.
o Job. 36. 7. *cf.* Esth. 6. 6–11.
p *cf.* Gen. 21. 6, 7. *cf.* Gen. 25. 21. 1 Sa. 2. 5. *cf.* Is. 54. 1-10.
q ver. 1; Ps. 150. 1, 6.

for in Syria and Palestine, the man who is shut out from society lies upon the *mezbele* (the dunghill or heap of ashes,) by day calling the passers-by for alms, and by night hiding himself in the ashes that have been warmed by the sun" (*Delitzsch*).

Out of this misery and degradation God yet raises up, to put a wretch like this among the nobles (*nedibhim*, the men of princely liberality),—yea, the nobles of his people. This is a repetition of Hannah's words; and Hannah's own case is before the psalmist's mind, that case so memorable indeed for Israel: "He maketh the barren to keep house, a joyful mother of sons." Mary's song, at the beginning of the New Testament, reminds us, could we ever forget it, that *one* birth, impossible but for the stooping of God to man, has filled here for us the place of all others. And herewith has come for every recipient of divine grace now, the promise and the power of a resurrection, by which those worse degraded than the dwellers on the dunghill are raised to higher place than that of princes!

Hallelujah!

SUBD. 2.

The second subdivision shows us now these ways of God, which have been already before us, resulting in the attaching of Israel's heart to Himself in days that are still to come. And here there are two plain sections; the first of which gives the Old Testament argument; the second, the New. In the first the controversy between God and them is regarding idolatry (Ps. cxv). In the second, it is the "Stone" that they have rejected, but who becomes the "head of the corner" (Ps. cxviii). Thus the argument is complete.

Sec. 1.

The first section contains four psalms, none of them very long, and one the shortest in the Bible. In them we are first carried back, as in the beginning of the sixty-eighth psalm, to the exodus from Egypt, to see the power and grace of God as shown among them at that time. There had come in, alas, a breach between them and their glorious Leader in consequence of the straying of their hearts from Him, and the setting up of the abominations of the heathen before His eyes in the land from which they should have been rooted out. This is now looked back upon and judged in the light of their present experience of His delivering hand; and in the third psalm here (cxvi.) He has displayed Himself to them in the resurrection of the nation, so as to bring back their hearts effectually to Him. The final psalm (cxvii.) exhorts the nations of the earth to praise Him therefore for His loving-kindness and faithfulness towards the delivered nation.

The rejection or reception of Christ is nowhere in question.

PSALM CXIV.

The first psalm of the series is of the simplest character. It dwells upon the power of God as seen in the deliverance out of Egypt, and upon His gracious identification of Himself with them as His people at that time. It merely describes with emphatic brevity these things: suggesting the questions which formally it does not raise. Its fragmentary character is itself strikingly suggestive. Why should the history of which it speaks be thus exceptional and

SUBDIVISION 2. (Psalms cxiv.-cxix.)

The attaching of the soul to the God of salvation.

SECTION 1. (Psalms cxiv.-cxvii.)

One Jehovah: The Old Testament Lesson.

Ps. cxiv.

[1] PSALM CXIV.

The power of Jacob's God.

1 (1-4): God the Lord. (i.) at the beginning of the nation. (ii.) their relation to Him. (iii.) realization. (iv.) the prostrate earth.

WHEN Israel [r] went out of Egypt,—
the house of Jacob from a people of [s] strange language,—
Judah was his [t] sanctuary,
Israel his [u] dominion.
The sea saw and [v] fled:
[w] Jordan was turned back.
The [x] mountains skipped like rams,—
the hills like lambs.

2 (5-8): The Deliverer. (i.) the cause? (ii.) the added testimony. (iii.) the presence of God. (iv.) the experience.

[y] What ailed thee, thou sea, that thou fleddest?
thou Jordan that thou wast turned back?
Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams?
ye hills, like lambs?
[z] Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord,—
at the presence of the God * of [a] Jacob:
Who turned the [b] rock into a pool of water,—
the flint into a fountain of waters.

* *Eloah.*

r Ex. 13. 17, 18. Ps. 77. 20.
s Ps. 81. 5. *cf.* Jer. 5.15 *cf.* Zeph. 3.9 with Is. 19. 18.
t *cf.* Ex. 25. 8. *cf.* Ps. 22. 9. *cf.* Eph. 2. 22.
u *cf.* Mi. 4. 8 with Deut. 15. 6.
v Ex. 14. 21, 22. Ps. 77. 16.
w Josh. 3. 14-17.
x Ex. 19. 18. Ps. 29. 6. Ps. 68. 16. Hab. 3. 6.
y Hab. 3. 8.
z Ps. 18. 7. *cf.* Hag. 2. 6.
a *cf.* Ps. 24. 6. Is. 41. 14.
b Ex. 17. 6. Nu. 20. 8-11. Ps. 78. 15.

fragmentary? The covenant-Name, Jehovah, is significant in a very different way.

1. The psalm is in two parts of four verses each. The first speaks of God as Lord, and yet without mentioning Him: there was no need to do so. There is but One who can dry up the sea and make the mountains skip.

It was the beginning of their history as a nation: the passover, as we know, rearranged their year for them. Egypt, though so long the place of their abode, is but a place of strange language to those who are now to be the holy people of God. Only with redeemed ones can God dwell; and where He dwells He reigns: "Judah was His sanctuary; Israel His dominion." The names have their significance otherwise than historically: the "prince with God" is thus ennobled by the yoke he bears; the *holy* place is one with the place of "praise."

Nature realizes and owns her God: the sea and Jordan alike, at the two ends of the desert journey; Sinai between them no less manifests its awe: "the mountains skipped like rams, and the hills like lambs."

2. The second part begins with an inquiry as to the cause of this, the answer revealing another character of Him whose sovereignty is thus recognized, and who yet softens the majesty of His presence, to walk in company with the "worm Jacob." Nay, His glorious power is made but to serve the necessities of His creatures: "turning the rock into a pool,—the flint into a fountain of waters."

Far apart as they may be in time and diverse in manner, we see that it is the same God who afterwards put on a lowlier, yet more glorious dress in which to serve His people, coming into the wilderness Himself in fashion as a man, to do here the works which no other man did. What altered so for this people, the grace of such a beginning? What has banished from the world the tender presence of the Son of man? The two questions have but one answer. The generations of men, however far apart in time or place, have one fatal resemblance throughout. In the words of the apostle, "they did not like to retain God in their knowledge."

Ps. cxv.

1 (1-3): Plea to Jehovah.
(i.) to act for Himself alone.
(ii.) to prevent heathen taunt.
(iii.) God in heaven.

2 (4-8): The idols contrasted.
(i.) origin.
(ii.) witnesses that witness not.
(iii.) unrealizing.
(iv.) passive.

[2] PSALM CXV.

In contrast with the idols of men.

NOT unto [c]us, Jehovah, not unto us,
but unto thy name give glory,
for thy [d]loving-kindness, and for thy truth's sake:
Why should the nations say,
[e]Where is now their God?
But our God is in [f]heaven:
he hath done whatsoever he [g]would.

Their idols are [h]silver and gold,
the work of [i]men's hands.
They have a [j]mouth, and speak not;
eyes [k]have they, and they see not;
[l]Ears have they, and they hear not;
a [m]nose have they, and they smell not;
[n]Hands have they, and they handle not;
[o]feet have they, and they walk not;
neither make they murmur in their throat.

c *cf.* Deut. 9. 5. *cf.* Is. 48. 11. *cf.* Ezek. 36. 32.
d Ps. 107. 1. Ps. 63. 3.
e Ps. 42. 3, 10. Ps. 79. 10. Joel 2. 17. *cf.* Nu. 14. 13-16.
f Ps. 11. 4. Is. 66. 1.
g Ps. 135. 6. Dan. 4. 35. Job 33. 13.
h Deut. 7. 25. Ps. 135. 15-21.
i Is. 40. 19, 20. Is. 44. 12-17. Acts 17. 29.
j Jer. 10. 5. *ctr.* Ex. 20. 1.
k Ps. 94. 9. *ctr.* Deut. 11. 12. *ctr.* Prov. 15. 3.
l *cf.* 1 Kl. 18. 26-29.

ctr. Mal. 3. 16. m *ctr.* Gen. 8. 21; *ctr.* Is. 65. 5. n *cf.* 1 Sam. 5. 4; *ctr.* Dan. 5. 5; *ctr.* Ps. 18. 16. o *ctr.* Ps. 104. 3; *ctr.* Nah. 1. 3.

PSALM CXV.

The next psalm takes up the old controversy between God and man, which (not merely in Israel's history) proves the truth of the sentence passed upon man. He turns from God, when knowing Him,—turns then to the darkness; and out of this comes the substituting for the true God all the idols of his own heart. He manufactures the god he worships,—a thing so inherent in man that the light of Christianity has not sufficed to banish it from the world. Up to the time of the Babylonish captivity this was Israel's besetting sin. After this, indeed, this unclean spirit went out of them, according to the Lord's words (Matt. xii. 43–45): alas, it was not *cast* out; nor the house possessed by One stronger than he. It is ready, therefore, to be occupied afresh by him; and this will take place in the last days, when idolatry will be again set up in the very temple of God, in the midst of those returned to their own land; and the open defiance given to Him there will bring in the desolating judgment which has been so often spoken of.

In this psalm we have, however, no allusion to the circumstances of that time. But the predictions which assure us of it, both in the Old Testament and the New, enable us better to understand the coming up of this subject of idolatry in the psalms of the latter days. Nor, indeed, is an evil done with till it has been judged: it is never allowed merely to drop out of sight unnoticed; but "God requireth," as the preacher says, "that which is past." (Eccl. iii. 15.) A solemn consideration! Nothing but a real judgment of a thing before God can give it effectual burial.

1. The psalm begins with a pleading that Jehovah will act for Himself and for the glory of His Name, and not allow the heathen to taunt His people, as if Jehovah were one of their own gods, not to be found in the time of need. It is, in fact, Israel's sin which has given even the appearance of this; and therefore they urge that He give glory to His own Name, if He cannot to theirs: and this, not as if the account men made of Him were of such importance, save to them, and to the love therefore in Him which cared for them. And then again, He had pledged Himself to faith; and thus they could plead with Him for His truth's sake also.

Israel's God, after all, if for the nation's sin He were not found now in His

(v.) governmental penalty.
3 (9-11): The sanctuary refuge.
(i.) for the objects of grace.
(ii.) through Another's work for them.
(iii.) and the Spirit's work in them.
4 (12,13): The argument of experience.
(i.) as to Israel.
(ii.) the nations.
5 (14-18): Man with God.
(i.) continuance of blessing.

They that make them are [p]like unto them,
[and] every one that trusteth in them.

O Israel, [q]trust in Jehovah!
he is their help and their [r]shield.
O house of [s]Aaron, trust in Jehovah:
he is their help and their shield.
Ye that [t]fear Jehovah, trust in Jehovah:
he is their help and their shield.

Jehovah hath been [u]mindful of us, he will bless [us]:
he will bless the house of Israel,
he will bless the house of Aaron:
He will bless them that fear Jehovah,
[v]small and great.

Jehovah will [w]increase you still,
you and your children.

p Is.44.9-11. Hab. 2. 18.
q Ps. 118. 8. Jer. 17. 7,8. Ps. 131. 3.
r Gen. 15. 1. Ps. 3. 3.
s Ps. 118. 3. 1 Chr. 6.49, 50, etc.
t Ps. 34. 9. Ps. 118. 4. cf. Hos. 3.5.
u Ps. 111. 5. cf. Jer. 31. 20, 34. cf. Is.49.14-16.
v cf. Deut.1. 17. cf. Rev. 11. 18.
w cf. Is. 49. 19-23. cf. Is.54.2,3. cf. Hos. 1. 10.

place on earth, was still in heaven. He was a reality, accomplishing whatever He would, spite of all opposition. And this leads naturally to the comparison with idols.

2. What were they, these idol-images? Matter simply — silver and gold — shaped by men's hands! Mouth and eyes there all right: both things that are said to "speak," and are in different ways "witness" for the man himself, an index of what is in the heart. But the idol gives no response to his worshiper by word or look. Nay, he realizes nothing: the voice that cries to him he hears not, the odor of incense or of sacrifice he perceives not. No hand can he stretch out to help, no foot of his will stir to bring relief, no murmur of sound even is in the idle throat. What can these senseless deities do but degrade the men who bow before them into beings as senseless? And this is the just penalty upon those who can forsake God, to follow palpably their own inventions.

3. From this the psalmist turns to exhort the people of God to cleave fast to Him who is not impotent nor impassive, but the help and shield of all that trust in Him. Israel, the house of Aaron, and those that fear Jehovah, are separately exhorted; nor is this mere amplification or embellishment. "Israel" is at once the nation as a whole, the people of Jehovah, the objects of His grace, who, crippled like their father in their human strength, cleave to Him in their helplessness, and find it not in vain. The house of Aaron, on the other hand, are the recognized ministers of this grace, who speak of sacrifice — of the work of Another for them. While "those that *fear* Jehovah" declare by this character the work of the Spirit in them. Thus the living God has indeed shown Himself out for the people of His choice, not only in the grace which invites confidence, but in the *activity* of grace in Son and Spirit,— the work done *for* them, and the work done *in* them. I need hardly point out how completely the numerical structure justifies these thoughts.

4. After this exhortation, in which so much encouragement is wrapped up, we have the argument of experience as to this living God. To say "Jehovah *has been* mindful of us," is, for those who know his unchangeableness. to be entitled to say "He *will* bless us." But in accordance with this line of thought, the circles of blessing are differently divided. "Those that fear Jehovah" stand by themselves, I think, to show that under this as a principle blessing can come to others than to Israel,— with whom yet the house of Aaron remains, as in fact having the priesthood by which the whole earth draws near to God. (Isa. lxi. 6.)

5. After this the blessedness of man with God can be told out. Blessing is continuous, just because it is Jehovah's blessing, unchangeable as Himself, and they are in covenant-relation with the Creator of all.

(ii.) covenant-relation.
(iii.) the portion of men.
(iv.) the dead have lost it.
(v.) but we are with Him.

Ye are the blessed of Jehovah,
who [x]made heaven and earth.
The [y]heavens are Jehovah's heavens;
but the earth he hath given to the children of men.
The [z]dead praise not Jah,
nor any that go down into silence,
But *we* will praise Jah
[a]from this time and for ever.
Hallelujah!

Ps. cxvi.

1 (i, 2): The cause.
(i.) His grace (?)
(ii.) the confession of dependence.

[3]PSALM CXVI.

The God of resurrection, and the recall of Israel's heart to Him.

I [b]LOVE; because Jehovah hath [c]heard
my voice [and] my supplications.
Because he hath inclined his ear unto me,
and I [d]will call [upon him all] my days.

2 (3-6): Deliverance.
(i.) the occasion.

The [e]toils of death faced me about;
and the straits of Sheol took hold on me:*
I found [f]distress and sorrow.

(ii.) the cry for deliverance.

Then I [g]called on the Name of Jehovah:
I beseech thee, Jehovah, [h]deliver my soul.

(iii.) Jehovah manifested.

[i]Gracious is Jehovah, and righteous:
yea, our God is merciful.
Jehovah [j]keepeth the simple:
I was brought [k]low, and he saved me.

(iv.) the experience.

3 (7-9): The return.
(i.) the cause.

Return, my soul, unto thy [l]rest:
for Jehovah hath dealt [m]bountifully with thee.

* *Literally*, "found me."

x Ps. 96. 5. Ps. 121. 2. Is. 42. 5.
y cf. Gen. 1. 28. *cf.* Acts 17. 26. *ctr.* Eph. 1. 3.
z Ps. 6. 5. Ps. 30. 9. Is. 38. 18, 19. *ctr.* Phil. 1. 23.
a Ps. 113. 2.
b Ps. 18. 1. Ps. 31. 23.
c cf. Ps. 40. 1. Ps. 10. 17.
d Ps. 104. 33. Ps. 63. 7.
e cf. Ps. 18. 4-6. *cf.* Jonah 2. 1-6.
f Ps. 31. 9. *cf.* Jer. 30. 7.
g Ps. 107. 6. Ps. 50. 15. *cf.* ver. 13.
h Ps. 70. 1 with Ps. 89. 48. Is. 46. 3, 4.
i Ex. 34. 6, 7. Ps. 103. 8. Joel 2. 13.
j Ps. 121. 3, 4, 5. Ps. 145. 20. Ps. 119. 130.
k Ps. 142. 6. Is. 38. 14. *cf.* Is. 17. 4.
l cf. Ps. 126. 1. *cf.* Is. 28. 12.
m Ps. 13. 6; Ps. 142. 7.

But the sphere of this blessing, as the Old Testament reveals it, is definitely pointed out: *not* the heavens, which are Jehovah's, but the earth: this He has given to the children of men. But the dead then are out of it: the wicked have been turned into sheol, and the resurrection of the just has taken place, though the psalm says nothing of this. The New Testament here comes fully in to explain and supplement the Old. Death is now the doom only of those away from God; but "we," says the psalmist, "we [the living] will praise Jehovah: from this time and forever."

PSALM CXVI.

This does not, however, complete the story; and the 116th psalm comes in here to show how nearly Israel had been in those terrible jaws of death,—ingulfed, but for the mercy of God, to utter perdition. It is the sense of this deliverance that brings their hearts to God, and makes them His servants for ever.

1. The opening of the psalm is simple enough: a story which every one brought to God will recognize as his own. Israel, in the realization of the grace that has answered her, takes her place of confession of Jehovah her God, henceforth to own Him alone.

2. The deliverance is then recounted from the toils of death and the straits of sheol. They calling on Jehovah in distress, He manifested Himself in loving mercy and salvation.

3. The soul can now return to its rest. Delivered from death, Israel walks before God in the land of the living.

(ii.) delivered from death. (iii.) before Jehovah as brought up from death.

4 (10, 11): The experience. (i.) a certain truth. (ii.) man a false confidence.

5 (12-15): Man with God. (i.) the question of congruity. (ii.) the testimony of His salvation.

For thou hast delivered my [n] soul from death,
mine eyes from [o] tears,
my feet from [p] falling.
I will [q] walk before Jehovah,
in the land of the living.

I [r] believe now, for I speak:
as for me, I was brought very low;
I said in my [s] alarm:
All men are liars.

What shall I [t] render unto Jehovah,
for all his benefits toward me?
I will take the [u] cup of salvation,
and call on Jehovah's name.

n Ps. 56. 13. Ps. 68. 20.
o cf. Is.25.8. *cf.* Rev.7.17.
p cf. Mi.4.6, 7. *cf.* Jude 24.
q Ps. 119. 3, 45. Ps. 27. 13. Is. 2. 5.
r 2 Cor.4.13, 14. *cf.* Jno.3.11.
s Ps. 31. 22. *cf.* Jer.9.1-8.
t cf. Is.38.15. *cf.* 2Sa.7.20.
u ctr. Matt. 26. 39, 42. *cf.* Is.51.17, 22. *cf.* Song 5.1.

4. The fourth section, though only of two verses, is as important as it is emphatic. Experience has shown absolutely what the psalmist believes as a most certain truth, that all confidence in man is vain. "I said in my haste to escape" — not that it was, as we say, a mere hasty speech, for it is this in which he is so confident that he speaks it out — "all men are liars."

This realized in the soul, with honest self-application, sweeps it clean of the last remnant of self-righteousness and self-dependence. Out of a wreck so absolute nothing is saved, except what was never in it. *God* remains, and there is nothing else. The ground is clear for faith to build its temple for Him alone.

5. He turns, therefore, to ask, "What shall I render to Jehovah for all His benefits toward me?" What is right and suitable when all that is of value is what I find in Him? Well, I can receive and own His grace: "take the cup of salvation, and call upon Jehovah's Name."

But there is more than this. There are vows now to be performed to Jehovah: and this is repeated in the same words before the close of the psalm. Israel's legal vow she has, as we know, utterly failed in, and is still suffering the consequences of her failure; but there are thanksgiving vows that in the day of coming blessing shall be fulfilled. (Ps. lvi. 12; Isa. xix. 21.) They imply no legality, but the consciousness of what grace has done, and the praise with which the heart is filled and empowered. Praise is now easy, — necessary: it is, indeed, but what *His* vow implies who will be in that day the Leader of His people's praises (Ps. xxii. 22, 33); and who will be silent then? Thus these vows are evangelic only. They are connected with the "cup of salvation," and Another's work, — the joyful assurance of what that work means for them.

The 15th verse is a kind of enigma, in the connection in which it stands. It is, in fact, however, the solution of an enigma, and one most important for the soul at all times. For the law, death, as we have elsewhere seen abundantly, and as we see in the earlier part of this very psalm, was necessarily a shadow. The blessings declared by law are so thoroughly blessings to be enjoyed on earth, the dead thus losing part in them; those of the prophets themselves being so much of this character—Israel's blessings in the land in coming times—that of necessity this would be so until, with the New Testament, the full revelation of the heavenly things should come. Going through the sufferings and trials of the latter days, in which the question of their title to national blessing was pressing upon them, death would again have for the remnant of Israel all its significance. Were *they* to die or live would seem to involve fully the question of the wrath or favor of God; and under the bitter persecution of that time many, in fact, will die. Resurrection might explain this: for the orthodox in Israel have, as we know, always believed in resurrection; but here again there might be a question: *Was not the resurrection already passed?* For Christians, and along with these the whole of the saints of former times, it will in fact have taken place when Israel's

(iii.) accomplished vows.

I will [v]perform to Jehovah my vows,
yea, in the presence of all his people.
Precious in the sight of Jehovah
is the [w]death of his pious ones.

(iv.) the lesson of experience.

6 (16-19): The victory of God.

(i.) the obedience of grace.

Yea, Jehovah, for I am thy [x]servant:
I am thy servant, the son of thy handmaid:
thou hast [y]loosed my bonds.
I will [z]sacrifice to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving,
and will [a]call on the name of Jehovah.

(ii.) the confession of Jehovah.

I will [b]perform my vows to Jehovah,
yea, in the presence of all his people;

(iii.) accomplished vows.

In the [c]courts of Jehovah's house,
in the midst of thee, Jerusalem.
[d]Hallelujah!

(iv.) the place of this.

v *cf.* Ps. 22. 25. Ps. 66. 13.
w Ps. 72. 14. Ps. 9. 12.
x *cf.* Is. 42. 1. *cf.* Is. 65. 13, 14.
y Ps. 102. 20. Is. 52. 2. *cf.* Zech. 9. 11, 12.
z Ps. 107. 22. *cf.* Is. 51. 3. *cf.* Jer. 33. 10, 11.
a ver. 13.
b ver. 14.
c Ps. 96. 8. Ps. 84. 2. 10. *cf.* Is. 62. 8, 9.
d Ps. 117. 2.

travail-pangs come upon her; and can they be ignorant of this who are under the teaching of Christ, specially addressed to those in view of that time of unequaled tribulation (Matt. xxiv.)? His word there, moreover, is that "he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." What, then, as to the saints of that period does death mean?

Most confirming it is to find in the book of Revelation, which so clearly brings before us the trials and sufferings of these very Israelitish saints, the same question anticipated and provided for. In the 14th chapter, which has to do with those who are seen anticipatively in the commencement of it as standing upon *Mount Zion* with the victorious "Lamb," after Babylon is fallen (ver. 8), and when the time of the antichristian "beast" and his followers is in contemplation, it is suddenly announced, as if in contrast with the woe upon the beast-worshipers, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord *from henceforth.* Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." (ver. 13.)

The words "from henceforth" show the special application of what must seem otherwise a general truth; and the connection shows that the application must be, pre-eminently at least, to the latter-day remnant of Israel. And here is again the assurance so needful, just to those of this class, of death being no loss to these, but rather gain. How perfectly has the tenderness of the Lord provided for the peculiar need of these peculiarly tried and needy sufferers! The New Testament clasps hands, as it were, with the Old about them, to give them an assurance specially needed, as is plain, in their case: while the comfort abides, of course, for all of every time. Such are the "oracles" of God's living word; and so sweet a testimony have we of the heart behind them!

In the psalm, where it reaches prophetically in the history of the nation, Israel's salvation has come, and the blessedness of the dead saints has come into open light, and is a matter of experience. And so the numerical structure declares it. But, as already said, by this anticipative expression of it, it has been made the property of believers of every time; and lightens the shadows of the Old Testament with its emphatic assurance, "Precious in the sight of Jehovah is the death of His pious ones." It is not "*holy* ones" here, but those whose heart toward Himself the Lord realizes and acknowledges.

6. The closing section beautifully expresses in the number of it the triumph of His ways in bringing thus the heart of Israel back to Himself. We have, first of all, and as the foundation of all else, the spirit of obedience which is the fruit of His grace. They serve in liberty, in the constraining sense of His love who has loosed them from their bonds. They confess His Name with sacrifices of thanksgiving, and thus perform their vows. The circumstances are now added which assure us in what a scene the vision ends for us: "in the courts of Jehovah's house, in the midst of thee, Jerusalem." Jehovah has taken His place once

Ps. cxvii.

(i.) to praise Jehovah.
(ii.) because of His love to Israel.

[e]PSALM CXVII.

The whole earth summoned.

ALL [e]nations, praise Jehovah!
all races, laud ye him!
For his [f]loving-kindnesses have been mighty toward us,
and the [g]faithfulness of Jehovah [endureth] for ever.
[h]Hallelujah!

[e] Ps. 22. 27. Ps. 96. 7. Deut. 32. 43. Rom. 15. 11.
[f] Is. 63. 7. Jer. 31. 3.
[g] Ps. 146. 6. Mi. 7. 20. Ps. 100. 5.
[h] Ps. 115. 13. Ps. 116. 19, etc.

SECTION 2. (Psalms cxviii., cxix.)

Christ and the New Covenant.

Ps. cxviii.

1 (1-7): Perpetual goodness of Jehovah.
(i.) all exhorted.
(ii.) Israel, God's witness.

[i]PSALM CXVIII.

The Head of the Corner.

GIVE [i]thanks to Jehovah, for he is good:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
Let [j]Israel now say,
that his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.

[i] Ps. 106. 1. Ps. 107. 1. Ps. 136. 1. ver. 20. 1 Chron. 16. 34.
[j] Ps. 115. 9. *cf.* Ps. 22. 3.

more in the midst of His gathered people; and that is the sign which shows the day has now come for the earth; and for the "gathering of the peoples" so long foretold, at last to Shiloh. (Gen. xlix. 10.)

PSALM CVII.

Accordingly the whole earth is now summoned to Jehovah's feet; Israel's salvation being that which makes known His faithfulness to promises long since made, and which might seem to have passed out of His remembrance. In their story also His love is now shown out: a love which, if shown out to them, is love in Him, and to be enjoyed by all who have hearts to entertain it.

Sec. 2.

We have had in the first section, then, how Israel's heart is attached to Jehovah, but only on the one side of this, as is plain: for the name of Christ has not yet been uttered. This is supplied in the second section, which gives us now the New Testament side, as it were: Christ being seen as the One who as the chief corner-stone unites together the whole temple of Jehovah's praise. Accordingly, the 119th psalm shows the heart of Israel fully turned to God according to the terms of the new covenant,— His law written on the heart. The relation of these two passages to one another is striking, if compared with that of psalms i. and ii.; which give us, first, the spirit of obedience, the Israelite whose "delight is in the law of Jehovah"; while the second shows us Christ, again as rejected of man, but set as King in Zion, and the happiness of all that put their trust in Him. The one is the dispensational order, and is the same as that of the two *sections* here; the other is the moral order; for it is Christ who is the "Mediator of the new covenant," and who, as we look upon Him, changes us into His moral image. The two psalms are in perfect relation therefore to one another, though so different in themselves.

PSALM CXVIII.

The speaker in the first psalm is again one of the remnant of Israel of the latter days, the representative of the nation as wrought in by the Spirit of God; and the psalm itself is throughout prophetic. It has five sections, which are not in general difficult of connection. Any difficulty which we may find will be rather in detail.

1. The perpetual goodness of Jehovah, so constantly and naturally before us in this Deuteronomic book of the Psalms, is again the thesis here. All are exhorted

(iii.) the priestly family.
(iv.) the nations.
(v.) way and end.
(vi.) a challenge of adversaries.
(vii.) perfect rest.

Let the [k]house of Aaron now say
that his loving-kindness [endureth] forever.
Let those that [l]fear Jehovah now say,
that his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
Out of [m]strait I called upon Jah:
in a [n]large place Jah answered me.
Jehovah is [o]for me; I fear not:
[p]what can man do to me?
Jehovah is for me among [q]those that help me:
and *I* shall [r]see [my desire] on those that hate me.

2 (8-12): The opposition.
(i.) Jehovah supremely sufficient.
(ii.) better than the liberal hearted.
(iii.) Jehovah's name.
(iv.) the vanity of the attempt.
(v.) the reward.

It is [s]better to take refuge in Jehovah
than to put trust in man;
It is better to take refuge in Jehovah
than to put trust in [t]nobles.
All nations [u]compassed me about;
but in Jehovah's name I cut them off.
They compassed me about, yea, they compassed me about;
but in Jehovah's name I [v]cut them off.
They compassed me like [w]bees;
they are [x]quenched as a fire of thorns:
for in Jehovah's name I cut them off.

3 (13-19): Jehovah the sanctuary.
(i.) my sufficiency.
(ii.) my salvation.

Thou hast [y]thrust at me hard to make me fall:
but Jehovah helped me.
Jah is my [z]strength and psalm:
and he is become my salvation.

[k] Ps. 115.10. *cf.* Ezek. 44. 15, 16.
[l] Ps. 115. 11. Ps. 135. 19, 20. *cf.* Ps. 40. 3.
[m] Ps. 50. 15. Ps. 120. 1.
[n] Ps. 18. 19. Ps. 31. 8. *cf.* Is. 54. 2, 3.
[o] Rom. 8. 31. *cf.* Is. 54. 11–17.
[p] Ps. 27. 1. Is. 51. 12. Heb. 13. 6.
[q] Ps. 54. 4. *cf.* 1 Chr. 12. 18.
[r] Ps. 54. 7. Ps. 92. 11. Ps. 112. 8.
[s] *cf.* Is. 30. 1, 2. *cf.* Is. 2. 22. Jer. 17. 5, 7.
[t] Ps. 146. 3. Ps. 107. 40. *cf.* Is. 32. 1, 5. 6.
[u] *cf.* Ps. 59. 6, 14. *cf.* Ps. 83. 5–8.
[v] Ps. 149. 6–9.
[w] *cf.* Deut. 1. 44. *cf.* Is. 7. 18, 19 with Is. 59. 19.
[x] *cf.* 2 Sa. 23. 6, 7.
cf. Ps. 58. 7-9. [y] *cf.* Mi. 7. 8; *cf.* Ps. 18. 17; Ps. 27. 2. [z] Ps. 18. 1; Ex. 15. 2; Is. 12. 2.

to give Him thanks for this, with the division that we have had elsewhere into Israel, the national witness for Him,—the house of Aaron, the priestly family, and those that fear Jehovah, which would include, at least, those turned to Him from the Gentiles. The separation of the house of Aaron from the rest of the nation would seem still to indicate the sacrificial basis upon which all ever depends for them.

There follows the practical expression of His loving-kindness whose name is shown by the constant reiteration of it to be so endeared to them. They called upon Him in strait: in a large place He answered. Way and end are simply enough connected thus; and the simplicity is the sweetness of it. What power is there in the cry of a needy suppliant for Him! As a result the soul becomes bold in its confidence: with Jehovah for him, what is it possible for man—all men—to do? He is among those that help him, their strength and inspiration, and the overthrow of enemies is sure to come.

2. The opposition is now seen in its full extent, according to the prophetic picture of Israel in the last days. It is prefaced with the reiterated assurance of how much better it is to trust in Jehovah than in men of any kind, even the nobles (*nedibhim*), the men of liberality and frank chivalrous action. All nations had gathered against Israel, only to be cut off by a feeble people sheltered and energized by Jehovah's Name. Like bees they gather, like a fire of thorns, which burns up fiercely and dies out, they are quenched and gone.

3. Jehovah is then again celebrated as their sanctuary and refuge,—not merely a safe and sure retreat, but where the holiness of His presence is felt and finds response. The psalmist apostrophizes here the vanquished enemy. "Thou hast thrust at me hard, to make me fall; but Jehovah helped me. Jehovah is my strength and psalm: and He is become my salvation." Thus singing and

(iii.) the realization.

(iv.) the experience.

(v.) the outcome of exercise.

(vi.) limited discipline.

(vii.) the perfect end.

4 (20-26): Tested all round.

(i.) the righteous?

(ii.) the answer in salvation.

The voice of [a]singing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous:
Jehovah's right hand doeth [b]valiantly.
Jehovah's right hand is [c]lifted up;
Jehovah's right hand doeth valiantly.
I shall [d]not die but live,
and [e]declare the works of Jah.
Jah hath [f]chastened me sore,
but to [g]death he hath not given me up.
Open me the [h]gates of righteousness:
I will go into them, I will give thanks to Jah.

This [i]gate belongeth to Jehovah,
the [j]righteous shall enter it.
I will give thanks to thee, for thou hast [k]answered me,
and hast become my [l]salvation.

[a] Ps.126.1,2. *cf.* Jer. 30. 18, 19.
[b] *cf.*Ex.15.1.
[c] Ex. 15. 6. *cf.*Deut. 32. 41. Is. 30. 30.
[d] *cf.* Ps.30.9. *cf.*Is.38.18-20.
[e] Ps. 107. 22. Ps. 73. 28. Ps. 66. 16. Is. 12. 4.
[f] *cf.* Jer. 30. 11. *cf.* Is. 40. 2.
[g] *cf.* Jer. 4. 27. *cf.* Am.9.8-15.
[h] Is. 26. 2. Is. 62. 10.
[i] *cf.* Ps.24.8-10.

cf. Ezek. 44. 1-3. [j] *cf.* Is. 60. 21; *cf.* Is. 35. 8-10. [k] Ps. 116. 1; *cf.* Ps. 20. 1. [l] ver. 14; Is. 12. 2, 3; Ex. 15. 2; Is. 60. 18; *cf.* Gen. 49. 18.

salvation are now uttering themselves in the tents of the righteous, and it is as at the Red Sea and more marvelously, Jehovah's right hand that has accomplished all: Jehovah is the "man of war"; "Jehovah's right hand doeth valiantly."

But there is more for them than external deliverance in all this, even as the sorrow that they had been passing through was the sign and consequence of a spiritual condition which had forced Jehovah into opposition to them. They had had to face death with the terror of God's wrath in it, as we have seen. Yet He had not given them over to it. The exercise had been profitable for them; the chastening had done its work; and now they would not die, but live. The gates of *righteousness* could now be opened to them, and they would enter in and give thanks to Jehovah.

4. But even so, this is not all: we are, in fact, only approaching the real and fundamental truth of their condition. The gate of righteousness which they have challenged — the way into Jehovah's presence — belongs to Himself. He alone it is who can affix the terms of admission, terms which must be set by the demands of His own nature. True: "the *righteous* shall enter it": that, in some sort, is easily apprehended; but it only raises the old question, "*How* shall man be just with God?" And have they — these delivered Israelites — now found the answer?

Beautiful it is to see then that in the very next sentence they are speaking of "salvation": "I will give thanks to Thee, for Thou hast answered me, and become my salvation." Righteousness with God is indeed the portion of the saved, and only of the saved: it is a gift, and not a work wrought out by us, nor (in the sense in which we are speaking of it) even wrought out *in* us. While there is, assuredly, a practical righteousness which is wrought out in us, and which is necessarily connected with our capacity to enjoy, and our moral fitness for, the presence of God, it is not any the more the "gate" into His presence. Here the righteousness we need is in Another. *Christ* is Himself the "gate." The purging of sin and the positive value in which we stand are found in One alone who is the Head of blessing for His people. And thus we can realize to the full the personal element in the language here: "I will give thanks to Thee, for Thou hast answered me, and hast become my salvation."

We naturally ask, however, is not this, perhaps, too evangelic an interpretation of what may be more simply taken? Israel has been in peril from external enemies, the nations that had been gathered against her, and the so absolutely similar words of the 14th verse unmistakably refer to this temporal deliverance. Is there anything more in the present one than the thought of entering into the

(iii.) Risen!
(iv.) experience.
(v.) the ways of God.

A [m]stone which the builders refused
is become the head of the corner.
This [n]cometh of Jehovah:
it is marvelous in our eyes.
This is the [o]day that Jehovah hath made:
we will exult and rejoice in it.

m Matt. 21. 42-44. Mk. 12. 10, 11. Lk. 20. 17, 18. Acts 4. 11. 1 Pet. 2. 4-8. Is. 28. 16.
n cf. Dan. 2. 34, 35; *cf.* Nu. 23. 23.
o cf. Ps. 92, title; *cf.* Is. 26. 1; *cf.* Is. 60. 19, 20.

presence of God now, to thank Him for this decisive overthrow of all their adversaries?

This is a question which cannot, I believe, be decided by the words themselves, but only by the connection. And here it is certain that they have been speaking of a "gate" which "belongeth to Jehovah," and which necessarily implies conditions as to entering into His presence. "This gate"—what can it be? If it be simply their own righteousness,—the righteousness of a people just now threatened with judgment for their sins,—it would seem as if much stress could be hardly laid upon it; and here we naturally look for some reference to how the long tale of sin had been put away. But more than this, the very next verse does undoubtedly refer to Christ, and in such a character as completely to justify the thought that the foundation of the soul in the presence of God is in fact before them:—

"A stone which the builders refused is become the Head of the corner."

The Lord Himself and the apostles quote and apply this scripture. Isaiah (xxviii. 16) gives us the direct prophecy: "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a Stone, a tried Stone, a precious corner-[stone], a sure foundation." It is thus a *foundation*-stone that is in question, and we can read "the head of the corner" in no other way than it is read in Ephesians (ii. 20), "Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone." The "chief corner-stone" and the "head of the corner" are the same thing.

We are, of course, in Ephesians in the midst of Christian realities, and must take care, in any transference of texts to Jewish themes, to make account of resulting differences: but in the case before us we may find the differences themselves to give instruction. The apostle Paul is speaking of the church of God, which in the Old Testament was a mystery yet hidden. It is this of which he adds: "in whom the whole building fitly framed together groweth into a holy temple in the Lord." Thus he is speaking of a temple — a Christian one — and of Christ as its foundation. The connection in the psalm enables us to see that here also it is the foundation of a temple that is spoken of. In the gospel of Matthew, where the Lord refers to this text, it is in the temple that He actually is. When He finally leaves it, He calls it no longer God's but "your house," and pronounces sentence upon it as such: not one stone would be left upon another (xxiii. 38; xxiv. 2). Upon *their* foundations, who in self-righteousness and unbelief rejected Him, no dwelling-place of God could stand.

Israel had thus remained for many generations without that which was their distinctive glory. But they are again to possess it; and the psalm contemplates this blessed time. Christ, hitherto rejected, will then be the foundation upon which the dwelling of God among them will securely rest. When we look at the typical house, even in the wilderness, we are at no loss to understand that the sockets of the boards which were its framework spoke of Him, being made of the silver money of atonement (Ex. xxxviii. 27). As its curtained gates also spake of Him, and the beautiful curtains which were the very tabernacle itself. "In Him" the whole structure stood; and ark and mercy-seat, the very place of the Throne, still spake of Him. In this psalm we have no longer the tabernacle, but the solid foundations of the permanent building; but as to its essential meaning there could be no change; and when He declared to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," He spake of the temple of His

(vi.) the hindrance overcome. (vii.) the full blessing reached.

5 (27–29): Man with God.

(i.) light from the Mighty.

(ii.) relationship.

(iii.) praise to the manifested One.

[p] Save now, Jehovah, I beseech thee:
I beseech thee, Jehovah, give now [q] prosperity.
[r] Blessed is he that cometh in the name of Jehovah:
we have blessed you out of Jehovah's [s] house.

Jehovah is the Mighty One, and hath given us [t] light:
bind the [u] sacrifice with cords;
up to the horns of the altar.
Thou art [v] my Mighty One, and I will give thee thanks:
my God, and I will exalt thee.
Give [w] thanks to Jehovah, for he is good:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.

p Ps. 20. 9.
q cf. Ps. 45.4 with Is.35.
r cf. Matt. 21. 9. *cf.* Matt. 23. 39 with Is. 25. 9.
s ctr. Matt. 23. 38. Ps. 116. 19. Jer. 17. 26.
t Ps. 36. 9. Ps. 97. 11. *cf.* Is.30.26. *cf.* Is.60.19, 20.
u cf. Jer. 33. 9–11, 18. *cf.* Is. 60. 7.
v Ex. 15. 2; Ps. 48. 14; Is. 25. 1. *w* ver. 1.

body (John ii. 21). Essentially—in its true spiritual reality—He was the whole thing; and in the psalm here it is as the Risen One, refused of the builders, and His life taken from the earth, but alive again from the dead, with His glorious work accomplished, He is the foundation of Israel's praise for evermore.

We are carried thus far beyond the fact of their merely temporal deliverance, great and marvelous as that must be, and realize the foundation upon which the worshipers stand, and the "gate" which "belongeth to Jehovah," through which they come into His presence. Not any righteousness of their own is here in question. The once refused and slain, now risen and glorified One is all their joy.

"This cometh of Jehovah" is now their cry, "and it is marvelous in our eyes." So indeed it will be; and the whole "day" will be seen to be of Jehovah's making. He has brought it all about, the trial and the sorrow which were His only way of blessing for them, and the end now reached its glorious consummation. And now, all hindrance to their blessing being removed, their "Hosanna" ("save now") can be heard: "Save now, Jehovah, I beseech Thee; I beseech Thee, Jehovah, send now prosperity."

For the time of real and full return of heart to God is now reached, in which that will be accomplished of which the Lord spoke in the hour of His rejection as that which would bring Him to them once again. "Ye shall not see Me henceforth," He says, "until ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord." Here we have the decisive word: "Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord" (Jehovah); and this is the indication of their spiritual condition: He had had to say of them: "I have come in my Father's name, and ye receive Me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." (John v. 43.) For alas, it was against God Himself that they were in hostility: with the desperate implacability of a heart set upon its own lusts, they "both saw and hated" Him and His Father." (John xv. 24.)

Now that which He had declared they would do, they have done. At the standpoint of the psalm, Antichrist has come in his own name, and been received; but a remnant wrought upon by divine grace has been turned to God; and in these is found the revival of the national life. Theirs is the cry, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of Jehovah," and "out of the house of Jehovah" — the sign, as we have seen, of restored favor — they are saluted with blessing. The last part of the verse is evidently a responsive greeting from within, as the worshipers approach Jehovah's dwelling.

5. The last section is accordingly the joy and homage of those in restored and eternal relationship to God. "Jehovah is the Mighty One": they have proved Him such; but more,—"He hath given us light." Hence they fill the courts of His house with sacrifices, even up to the horns of the altar itself. He is *their* Mighty One,—*their* God; and they exalt Him. The psalm closes with the refrain of the anthem, heard ever and anon throughout this book: "Give thanks to Jehovah, for He is good: for His loving-kindness endureth for ever."

PSALM CXIX.

"That which the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." So the apostle describes for the Christian the efficacy of the grace that has in Christ been shown us. The law could not work in men the obedience it required. The cross, beheld by faith, condemned sin for us, so as to deliver us from it, and implant in our hearts the very principle of obedience, in a faith that worketh by love. And this is the connection between the present psalm and the one preceding it, though Israel and not Christians are before us in them. The law is written on their hearts, according to the promise of the new covenant (Jer. xxxi. 31–34); and here all *is* promise, that is, grace. The longest psalm in the whole book is the utterance of Israel's heart in praise of the law.

We need not wonder to find it to be an alphabetic acrostic, and that of the most regular and perfect kind. There is an *eight-fold* alphabet, this number eight showing what is new, in contrast with the old,*— thus the new covenant number — being stamped upon the whole psalm. Every letter of man's language now is taken up with the praise of that, which was but an intolerable yoke before.

"The Masora observes that the psalm contains only the one verse, 122,† in which some reference or other to the word of revelation is not found as in all the 175 others,— a many-linked name of synonyms which runs through the whole. In connection with this," says Delitzsch, "it may also not be merely accidental that the address, Jehovah, occurs 22 times, as Bengel has observed": though not in regular correspondence with the 22 sections.

There are also just *ten* synonyms of the law used by the psalmist, and which naturally remind us of the ten commandments of the decalogue, "word, saying; way, path; testimonies, judgments; precepts, statutes; commandment, law."‡ And these seem (though this may be disputed) to fall naturally into five pairs, as I have given them.

All this arrangement may seem artificial enough, if we take (as so often done) our knowledge for the measure of what is possible: which in Scripture is hardy enough. On the other hand, commentators have mostly renounced the idea of finding in the psalm any internal connection of thought. Only Delitzsch, so far as I am aware, has attempted a sketch of it, and this has met with little acceptance. Indeed the difficulty must needs be great of discerning links which are throughout moral and experimental, and which unite sentences which have the look of independence and ability to stand alone which these have. The numerical structure may here be expected, if anywhere, to show its worth as a guide to understanding; as the alphabetic arrangement would seem, in fact, to be intended to point out. It was one of the first clues which guided me, a good while since, in this direction, and I may be pardoned in preferring this to the despairing refuge of a help to remembrance, generally urged.

The psalmist has thus plainly marked out for us 22 sections. If the last were omitted, the rest would naturally fall into a triple septenary order, suiting well the regularity of structure otherwise; and capable, as I believe, of satisfactory comparison in this way, numerically and otherwise. The first seven would, then, seem to refer to *individual* condition; the second to relation to *external circumstances;* the third to divine holiness — the *sanctuary* view. Taking now the

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*Notice that 8 is the cube of 2; which is itself the expression of *difference, otherness*, here therefore fully realized.

† To which, however, verse 90 must surely be added.

‡ Here again the Masora seems to have made a faulty enumeration, strangely enough substituting for "path" "truth," or, according to another reading, "righteousness." But both these are attributes, not synonyms, of the law; and are so used.

Ps. cxix.

[2]PSALM CXIX.

Faith's testimony to the Word, in love and service.

DIVISION 1.

The individual believer.

[1] ALEPH.

Harmonious righteousness.

1 (1-3): The principle. (i.) wholehearted obedience. (ii.) observing His testimonies. (iii.) realized fulfillment.

[x]HAPPY are the perfect in the way,
who [y]walk in Jehovah's law.
Happy are they that [z]observe his testimonies:
they [a]seek him with the whole heart.
They also [b]practice no perversity:
they walk in his [c]ways.

2 (4-8): The soul's desire. (i.) as under authority.

Thou hast commanded thy precepts,
that they may be kept [d]diligently.

x Ps. 1. 1. Ps. 32. 1. Ps. 41. 1.
y *cf.* Lk. 1. 6. *cf.* Neh. 10. 29.
z *cf.* Deut. 33. 9.
a *cf.* Deut. 4. 29. *cf.* Jer. 29. 10-14.
b *cf.* Is. 60. 21. *cf.* 1 Jno. 3. 7-10.
c Ps. 128. 1. Ps. 25. 4, 5.
d Deut. 11. 13, 22. *cf.* Zech. 6. 15.

headings of the sections, as well as I have been able to give them, they would stand thus:—

1. *individually.*	2. *in external relations.*	3. *in view of divine holiness.*
1. harmonious righteousness.	1. persistent purpose. [good.	1. the rebellious. [them.
2. cleansing by the word.	2. things working together for	2. deliverance sought from
3. realizations.	3. recognitions.	3. sanctuary revelations.
4. in creature feebleness.	4. in trial from man.	4. in trial from defection.
5. but with the God of might.	5. but with God governing.	5. exercises.
6. thus overcoming.	6. overcoming in wisdom.	6. overcoming in judgment.
7. full rest of heart.	7. complete obedience.	7. perfection of the Word.

In any full way we cannot compare these yet, and it will be enough, at present, to invite comparison. The last section of all is left out of this table. It plainly cannot be compared, since there is no other 8th section, if it is to stand as such; and there are difficulties as to this, which also must be reserved for after-consideration.

DIV. 1.

The first division of the psalm speaks of what the Word is to the individual believer. There is absolutely no mention of others, except twice (verses 21, 23), and by implication once (22), in the first five sections. In the 6th the thought of overcoming brings them in (42, 46), and we find them in the 7th (51, 53); but there is as yet no hint of persecution, save by reproach. In the very next section—the first of the second division—(v. 61) "the cords of the wicked have wrapped him round," and in ten other verses they are spoken of; his life is continually in his hand; while those that fear God are mentioned five times. In the third division the wicked are mentioned fifteen times; but here he sees them trodden down, and put away like dross.

Sec. 1. (*Aleph.*)

1. The theme of the psalm begins, as so often, in its opening verses. The "way" for man is simply the way of Jehovah's law; and "happiness" is to be perfect in it. How blessed, indeed, just to have abidingly in the soul the consciousness that this only is happiness. To be delivered from the misery of one's own will, one's own way,—the very definition of sin (Isa. liii. 6)—how complete a deliverance is this! It is to have the law written upon one's heart, which is not a natural state but a *super*natural,—a work of divine grace. And this law is not merely arbitrary, the expression of authority: it is a "testimony" also, and one to which the awakened conscience responds. In this He is Himself declared: so that to "observe His testimonies" is to "seek Him with the whole heart." With such all is in accordance with the real nature of things: they do not twist them: "they practise no perversity; they walk in His ways." Safe, holy, and happy must be "*His* ways."

(ii.) for guidance.
(iii.) so as not to be ashamed.
(iv.) the test of experience.
(v.) appeal to government.

Oh that my [e]ways may be directed
to keep thy statutes!
Then shall I not be [f]ashamed:
when I have respect unto all thy commandments.
I will give thee [g]thanks in uprightness of heart
when I shall have learned the judgments of thy righteousness.
I will keep thy statutes:
[h]go not from me very far.

[e] Prov. 4. 26.
[f] Ps. 25. 2. *cf.* Joel 2. 26, 27.
[g] ver. 171. Ps. 47. 7.
[h] Ps. 34. 18.

[2] BETH.

Cleansing from evil by the Word.

1 (9–11): Its power.
(i.) for righteousness.
(ii.) dependent fellowship.
(iii.) holiness.

Wherewith shall a young man [i]cleanse his path?
in taking heed according to thy word.
With my [j]whole heart I have sought thee:
let me not [k]wander from thy commandments.
I have [l]hid thy saying in my heart,
that I might not sin against thee.

[i] *cf.* Jno. 13. 4–10. Jno. 15. 3.
[j] ver. 2. *ctr.* Jer. 3. 10. *cf.* 2 Chr. 15. 15.
[k] *cf.* Prov. 27. 8. *cf.* Rev. 2. 4, 5.
[l] Ps. 37. 31. *cf.* Ps. 40. 8. *cf.* Jer. 31. 33.

2. Now the soul pours itself out to Him. "*Thou* hast commanded Thy precepts"—the separate applications of the divine principles—"that they may be kept diligently." God does not speak positively, and then put up with trifling with what He says. Nor is this in the least what is meant by grace. There is no non-essential in what God has spoken: obedience is always what is essential; obedience to which we can affix limits means for us a wisdom which is above God's.

Nay, it is we who need to be taught wisdom: and for this, therefore, the heart cries out: "Oh that my ways"—my goings in the path—"may be directed to keep Thy statutes: then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto *all* Thy commandments." And it foresees that His judgments—His decisions in the court of conscience—will so approve His righteousness, that to learn these will produce a spirit of praise in an upright heart.

The last verse is an appeal to divine government not to go far away from one who had in heart to keep the divine statutes.

Sec. 2. (*Beth.*)

The next section is more difficult to put together and find meaning for as a whole; but we are in general (at least) right in seeking this at the beginning of any distinct part of Scripture, where we should put the title, and where God in His goodness hastens, as it were, to meet us with what is a real introduction to all that follows. This is why so often the psalms begin with what is the conclusion, then going back to lead us again toward it. In this case, the power of the Word to cleanse—that is, to separate—the soul from evil will be the theme of the section; and its two portions seem to harmonize well with this: the first part speaking of its inherent power for this; while the second shows how, in fact, the soul is drawn away and detached from all else by the love that absorbs and takes it up with God.

1. The *young* man is spoken of, no doubt, because life is strong in him, and the yet untried world full of natural attraction. Here, therefore, is the test-case for the word of God to prove its power; and it is perfectly able to do this, by the light shed by it upon the whole scene, which gives things their true character, by bringing God (who alone is Light) into connection with all. The soul, finding here its attraction, is set truly free, made master of itself and of its circumstances; while it realizes at the same time its dependence and its only safe shelter in the divine strength. Seeking Him with the whole heart, it has yet to pray, "Let me not wander." But it clasps all the more to its heart the divine sayings, that it may not sin against Him: hiding them there as a possession of which

2 (12-16): Drawn by love.
(i.) divine knowledge sought.
(ii.) testimony of God's judgments.
(iii.) joy in possession.
(iv.) meditation.
(v.) way and end.

Blessed art thou, Jehovah:
[m] teach me thy statutes.
With my [n] lips I have declared
all the judgments of thy mouth.
I have [o] rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies,
as much as in all riches.
I will [p] meditate upon thy precepts,
and have regard unto thy paths.
I [q] delight myself in thy statutes:
I do not forget thy word.

[m] vers. 26, 33, etc. Job 34. 32.
[n] Ps. 34. 11. *cf.* Ps. 40. 10.
[o] ver. 162.
[p] ver. 23, etc. Ps. 1. 2. Ps. 19. 14.
[q] vers. 35, etc.

[3] GIMEL.

Realizations.

1 (17-19): The entrance into these.
(i.) quickening needed.
(ii.) for discernment.

Deal [r] bountifully with thy servant [and] I shall live;
and I will keep thy word.
[s] Open mine eyes,
and I shall behold wondrous things out of thy law.

[r] Ps. 116. 7.
[s] *cf.* Lk. 24. 45, 46. *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 9-16.

it must not be robbed. And the world is full of robbers, who find its value to them only in its value to those from whom they would snatch it.

2. But now we see the heart in the presence and under the control of God: "Blessed art Thou, Jehovah"; to whom it turns with its consciousness of ignorance and its yearning desire,—"teach me Thy statutes."

Already, however, he has been speaking of what he knew, declaring God's judgments, the decisions He had given as to good and evil, right and wrong, and that faithfully,—holding back nothing. And how great a matter is this, for keeping a clean path,—the confession of God in all things, the committing one's self fully to all that He has made known as of Himself! The attitude of indecision tempts the assault of evil, while, God not being honored in it, He cannot honor one who is ashamed of Him. Joy in what is confessed thus goes with a true confession; and thus it follows here: "I have rejoiced in the way of Thy testimonies, as much as in all riches." The mind, too, naturally employs itself upon that which the heart enjoys. God's precepts are meditated on, and His paths regarded.

The section closes with the renewed experience of a joy in His statutes which is a sure preservative against a bad memory: "I delight myself in Thy statutes: I do not forget thy word."

Sec. 3. (*Gimel.*)

The third section speaks of realization by the soul of what God's word is, and of what things are as seen in the light of that word. Essentially, this is sanctification, because holiness is "holiness of truth." (Eph. iv. 24, *marg.*) Eternity reveals time: the presence of God all things as good or evil; and the world is then seen as a place of continual conflict from which no man can withdraw himself. This gives the second part of the section here.

1. We are wholly dependent upon God for ability to realize things in this way. Naturally, man "walks in a vain show, and disquiets himself in vain." True life begins for us in the bountiful grace of God, and is manifested in the keeping of His word; and the same energy which acts to bring us into this must still operate to retain us there. But in this way what marvelous things become known to us, and with eyes fully awake what glories may be revealed! It is simple that here we have the language of prayer. Nothing is more needed than the constant sense of dependence.

And how touching is the plea of the 19th verse, which reminds us not so much (as it is usually taken) of man's transience on earth, as the divine care for the stranger-guest in Israel, as the provisions of the law manifest it. We are apt to

(iii.) the portion of a guest.

I am a [t]sojourner in the land:
hide not thy commandments from me.

2 (20-24): Opposites.
(i.) a constant spirit.

My soul [u]breaketh for longing
after thy judgments at all times.

(ii.) those who stray.

Thou hast rebuked the [v]proud, [that are] cursed,
who wander from thy commandments.

(iii.) made manifest (?)

Remove from me [w]reproach and contempt:
for I have kept thy testimonies.

t Ps. 39. 12. *cf.* Heb. 11. 13. *cf.* Gen. 23. 4. *cf.* Ruth 2. 10–12.
u ver. 40. Job 23. 12.
v Ps. 94. 2. Is. 2. 12.
w Ps. 39. 8. *cf.* Is. 54. 4.

judge things rather by the narrow and sectarian spirit actually manifested by the nation in its later history than by the precepts of the inspired lawgiver. Yet, separated as they were by the law itself from the abominations to which the nations in their departure from God had given themselves up, He had placed them upon the very lines of intercourse between these nations, and at the throbbing centre of the world's traffic. Here was their mountain fastness in which the Word that was intrusted to them was to be maintained for the blessing of the whole human race; and here, in the presence of all the powers of the world, so frank an asylum was offered to the one who sought it, that a mere fugitive slave escaping there was sheltered and free to find his home under the protection of the Lord God of Israel, and no man might deliver him up. (Deut. xxiii. 15, 16.)

Israel themselves had known the "the heart of a stranger" by bitter experience, and God declared Himself to them as One that "loveth the stranger in giving Him food and raiment." They are exhorted, "Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." (Deut. x. 18, 19.) Nay, they were taught still to account themselves as strangers, even in their land, and to prove to themselves that love of His to strangers of which He speaks: "The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is Mine: for ye are strangers and sojourners with Me." (Lev. xxv. 23.)

This seems to be the key to the language in the psalm here: "I am a sojourner [or stranger] in the land." The Israelite, even if home-born, might still say that. He was thus, in frailty and dependence, entertained by God. Still more would these Israelites, brought home at last from all their wanderings, realize this. If the land had been their own, they would have lost it; but God could not forfeit His right to it, nor to put into it whomsover He might see fit. And for these, coming back from their long alienation, as prodigals to learn afresh the ways of Him whose grace now welcomed them, effectual indeed would be the plea: "hide not Thy commandments from me." As guests of His they will find a portion worthy of Him,—their lodging, food, and raiment, as His grace will give it; and His commands as their sweet enfranchisement from the ways of sin.

2. Thus the eyes open to the reality of things. Evil and good are seen in the sharp antagonism which exists between them. And, the eye affecting the heart, the soul breaks with the longing it has after those judgments of God which penetrate to the heart of things and make clear the essential, necessary opposition. It is no mere cold, colorless discrimination that is reached by this passionate longing after His mind, nor does the fervor of this spirit exhaust itself by its intensity, but abides "at all times." God abides the same, and communion with Him, if real, forms His character within us. God is not coldly right: He is "a consuming fire." His patience is not slowness of heart, but the pleading (if we may say so) of His love with men until all hope is over. Then the "wrath of the Lamb" will manifest itself, not pitiless, but not restrained by pity. The Lamb will be still the Lamb, and thus will such wrath be terrible indeed.

He sees it already taking effect: "Thou hast rebuked the proud": the creature exalting itself above its place,—against Him who has ordained it its place; "they are cursed who go astray from Thy commandments."

And then, suffering from the opposition of a world which has turned its back

(iv.) tested.

(v.) man with God.

Even [x]princes have sat [and] spoken against me:
thy servant doth meditate on thy statutes.
Thy testimonies also are my delight,—
my [y]counsellors.

[x] *cf.* Lk. 23. 10, 11. ver. 161.

[y] *cf.* vers. 98–100.

[4]DALETH.

In creature feebleness.

1 (25–29): All power in God.

(i.) quicken me!

(ii.) confession and God's answer.

(iii.) realization.

(iv.) the experience of weakness.

(v.) exercise.

My soul cleaveth to the [z]dust:
quicken me according to thy word.
I [a]declared my ways and thou answeredst me:
teach me thy statutes.
Make me to [b]understand the way of thy precepts:
and I will meditate upon thy wondrous works.
My soul [c]melteth for heaviness:
make me arise, according to thy word.
Remove from me the way of [d]falsehood;
and graciously grant me thy law.

[z] *cf.* Gen. 3. 19. Ps. 44. 25. *cf.* Is. 52. 2.
[a] *cf.* Ps. 32. 5.
[b] *cf.* Dan. 12. 10. *cf.* Hos. 14. 9.
[c] Ps. 107. 26. *cf.* Prov. 12. 25.
[d] *cf.* Prov. 30. 8. *cf.* Jno. 17. 17.

on God, the speaker pleads: "Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept Thy testimonies."

"Testimonies" are to fact and truth: and God's facts will assert themselves as that, and His truth will manifest itself at last, beyond all controversy. Then, at least, will reproach and contempt pass from those who have identified themselves with that which will be seen in its true character. And this may take place sooner than the inevitable time in which it surely shall. Meanwhile present reproach helps of itself to test and free from suspicion the soul that through it all makes the divine statutes its occupation and delight. And with this the section ends,—the expression of unfeigned joy and confidence in that which is realized to be true and the living word of unfailing wisdom: "Thy testimonies are my delight,—my counsellors."

Sec. 4. (*Daleth.*)

We have now another kind of realization—experience of a sorrowful kind, but most needful, that of the weakness of the creature, not in another but in one's self. This is the necessary complement of the truth that *all* power is of God. Only that this is realized now, not merely as what is necessary to the creature, what would be as true of an angel as a man, but in the moral collapse of a fallen being. This is more before us in the first part here, which begins with the confession of a soul cleaving to the dust; while in the second confidence is expressed though in dependence, and a steadfast course is contemplated, spite of—rather *because* all rests so absolutely upon God.

1. The soul, though the dweller in a dust-formed tenement, cleaves to the dust only because fallen. Out of the consciousness of this, the psalmist cries for the power of God to energize it according to the gracious promises of the Word. He has bared before God his whole practical condition, and has the consciousness of being answered by Him. But He longs to know more His statutes, and the whole way in which His precepts lead. There He is satisfied that he will find the wondrous works of God for fruitful meditation: in truth what glories may be realized in the path ordained of God! If an Israelite could say so, how much more we! We dull the prospect by unbelief, and shut ourselves out of it by a path self-chosen, and shut ourselves in to the dull, common lives we live, alas, so much. This is because we will, not because God will have it. And yet this path with God is ordained for the abasement of all human pride, and the valley of humiliation lies in it. "My soul melteth for heaviness," he cries; but then there is pledged strength to meet him: "make me to arise, according to Thy word." Exercised by the sense of frailty, he seeks also to have removed from him the way of falsehood, and that God would graciously grant him (according to the character of the psalm throughout) His authoritative law.

2 (30-32): Confidence in dependence. (i.) choice of the way of truth. (ii.) cleaving to God's testimonies. (iii.) the fulfillment.

The way of truth have I [e]chosen:
thy judgments I have set [before me].
I [f]cleave unto thy testimonies:
Jehovah, put me not to [g]shame.
I will run the way of thy commandments,
when thou shalt [h]enlarge my heart.

[e] ver. 111.
[f] *cf.* Rev. 3. 8.
[g] Ps. 25. 2, 3.
[h] *cf.* 2 Cor. 6. 11. *cf.* Rom. 7. 24 with Rom. 8. 2-4.

5 HE.

But with the God of might.

1 (33-37): The Enlightener. (i.) perpetual obedience promised. (ii.) discernment being given. (iii.) the path delighted in. (iv.) but the world felt.

Teach me, Jehovah, the way of thy statutes:
and I will keep it unto the [i]end.*
Give me [j]discernment, and I shall keep thy law:
yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.
Make me to walk in the path of thy commandments:
for therein I [k]delight.
Incline my heart unto thy testimonies,
and not to [l]covetousness.

[i] ver. 112. *cf.* Dan. 12. 12, 13. *cf.* Mk. 13. 13.
[j] *cf.* 1 Ki. 3. 9-12. *cf.* Prov. 8. 9.
[k] Ps. 1. 2. ver. 16.
[l] *cf.* Col. 3. 5. *cf.* Heb. 13. 5.

* "heel."

2. For He can speak of having chosen the way of truth, of setting God's judgments before him, and that not in momentary resolve, but *cleaving* to His testimonies: and thus can confidently plead not to be put to shame. In truth it is impossible to one who does this, that he ever should be. So the soul assures itself, gathers up its strength, and contemplates the way opening up before it; yet in perfect conviction at the same time of the feebleness of all human faculties in the realization of the divine: — of entire dependence therefore upon God in all things: "I will run the way of Thy commandments when Thou shalt enlarge my heart."

Sec. 5. (*He.*)

Accordingly the next section is in every verse a prayer. The soul is with God, where the language of faith, in a place of constant need, becomes naturally that of prayer. This is not strange to us in Christianity, nor unsuitable to its joyous spirit of praise. "Rejoice evermore; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks" (1 Thess. v. 16–18) are precepts which the apostle puts in the closest possible conjunction.

1. For enlightenment and supporting power the psalmist cries therefore here to the One with whom he goes. He must be taught the way of His statutes. He looks for this as meaning to walk in it, and to walk in it without any mental reservation; which is, indeed, the utter contrary of obedience, and the leaven of unbelief which (wherever found) will leaven all the life. "I will keep it unto the end," says the psalmist; or "to the heel," — the lowest and least noticed part.

"Give me discernment," he says again in his earnestness, "and I shall keep Thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart": these two things, the "whole heart" and "unto the end," go naturally together. And again he affirms in the next verse: "therein is my delight." Thus slavery there is none: he who is constrained by his affections is the freest man possible; and so it is here.

But the power of the world is felt, and the feebleness to resist temptation. He who has judged the world in general knows but too well how specific forms of it nevertheless may appeal to us, in which the characters of the world have not been recognized, — and how much cleaves to us, to which we would not cleave. Here God's "testimonies" have their place, as such: which bring in the revealing sunshine, never capable of gilding a thing that is evil. Yet he says, "*Incline* my heart," on the one side, and on the other "turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity." He *has* his heart inclined, when he says, incline it. He *is* turn-

(v.) from vanity to God.
2 (38-40): External confirmation of the word.
(i.) Thy promise.
(ii.) Thy judgments.
(iii.) fulfill my longings.

Turn away mine eyes from [m]beholding vanity;
quicken me in thy way.
Establish thy saying to thy servant,
who is [devoted] to thy [n]fear.
Turn away my [o]reproach which I fear,
for thy judgments are good.
Behold, I have [p]longed after thy precepts:
quicken me in thy righteousness.

m *cf.* Prov. 4. 25. *cf.* Matt. 5. 27, 28.
n Prov. 1. 7.
o ver. 22.
p ver. 20.

ing away his eyes when he prays to have it done. But so conscious is he of the infirmity that cleaves to him, and so desirous to be wholly right with God, that he can only find rest for his heart in this perfect Will and Wisdom to which he commits himself: "quicken me," he supplicates, "in Thy way."

The last three verses seem to depend upon the first two here; and the whole to express the need and craving of that light from the holy presence of God Himself which shall dispel all darkness and prevent the shadows of a dead world wrecked by sin from intruding on and deceiving the possessors of what is really life.

2. The second part is still an appeal, but in a different way: namely, that God would as a living God confirm His Word by His deed, and thus gloriously answer to the faith of His people. It is one of the glories of Scripture to touch in so many ways the whole state of things by which we are surrounded. Prophecy fulfilling shows it to be the voice of Him who is Lord of all circumstances and generations. Then history in it we find to be also prophecy, taking its place with other types and shadows of the future thus. Its moral judgments, too, appeal not merely to the conscience but also to the experience of all men and times. While again there are special promises which bring Him still nearer to the individual and into the most secluded lives. Naturally this comes into the experience of these psalms throughout; and here is the very place to find it spoken of,—in the fifth section of this great experimental psalm: here then we find it.

"Establish Thy saying to Thy servant" would thus be a prayer for the fulfillment of specific promise; where the state of the pleader may be brought forward as not (at least) barring the claim of faith. "Devoted" is perhaps too strong a word to insert, where the text has only the preposition;* but it needs only to be noted as inserted, to escape this difficulty.

The next verse, by the reason given, "for Thy judgments are good," would show that the reproach mentioned would have to do with some apparent non-fulfillment of these judgments in God's governmental ways among men. And such reproaches are being often cast upon the Lord's people: "Where is now their God?" (Ps. cxv. 2.) But the heart of the psalmist realizes the goodness of these "judgments,"—the decisions as to good and evil, which in the day of God's long-suffering His dealings with men do not always seem to affirm. Under the Old Testament dispensation, this was necessarily a much greater enigma than since the cross; and it is the occasion of much of the misapprehension of the friends of Job. With the enemies of the believer it is always a favorite reproach against him.

But the third verse takes a ground which seems clearer and surer. How can God but answer the longing of a heart after His precepts, where the clog of earth is felt and pleaded against? And the appeal is more confident, proportionally, however lowly it may be in its very nature: "quicken me in Thy righteousness."

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*Which *belongeth* unto Thy fear" (R. V.); "*leadeth* to thy fear," (Cheyne) give somewhat different renderings of another construction, where it is the promise (in its being fulfilled, of course) which leads to this. But Cheyne's translation seems too free; that of the Revised Version too vague.

6 VAU.

Thus overcoming.

1 (41–43): Jehovah's sufficiency.
(i.) His promise.
(ii.) the answer of faith to reproach.
(iii.) let the word be openly confessed.

Let thy [q] loving-kindness also come unto me, Jehovah:
thy [r] salvation according to thy saying.
And I shall have wherewith to [s] answer him who reproacheth me:
for I trust in thy word.
And take not [t] utterly out of my mouth the word of truth:
for I have waited upon thy judgments.

2 (44–48): Consequences.
(i.) consistent obedience.
(ii.) in liberty.

Then I shall keep thy law [u] continually:
for ever and aye.
And I will walk at [v] liberty,
for I have sought thy precepts.

q Ps. 25. 6.
r Ps. 118. 15.
s *cf.* 1 Sam. 2. 3.
t *cf.* Amos 8. 11, 12. *cf.* Ezek. 7. 26. *cf.* Ezek. 20. 1–3.
u ver. 33.
v *cf.* ver. 32. *cf.* Jno. 11. 44. *cf.* Jas. 1. 25.

Sec. 6. (Vau.)

There are but two prayers in the sixth section; upon the answer to which all the rest of it hangs. The number (6) is that of overcoming; and this is clearly and prominently the thought in verses 42, 45, and 46.

We need not wonder that in a world whose course is contrary to God, overcoming should have a marked place in divine testimony. Christ Himself was the great Overcomer; and for all who have faith in Him, the "victory that overcometh the world" is in their "faith." (1 John v. 4.) One of Israel's tribes, that of Naphtali, as we have seen at length elsewhere (Josh. xix. 32–39, *notes*), speaks typically of this aspect of the Christian as an overcomer. The epistles to the seven churches in Asia speak loudly as in trumpet-calls to him as that, all through the present period.

1. The first part here grounds all its assurance upon Jehovah's sufficiency; and this abides the same throughout all ages. Our claim upon it, through the work of Christ, has been indeed established, enlarged, and handed over to us in its completeness, since the Mediator of the New Covenant, by the blood of the Covenant, entered heaven itself and sat down there for us; but in all ages the assurance of the saint has been in the unchanging faithfulness of the Eternal God. For the psalmist it was the "saying of God," the "word of God," the "word of truth," upon which he rested; and for us to-day it is the same. For him also, that word revealed Jehovah's "loving-kindness," and a pledged "salvation," for which he waited; and so do we wait to-day. But we have a salvation wrought out by Another for us, as to which we can say, in a sense no Israelite could, "He *hath* saved us": and with this the Person of the Redeemer has come into view, and God Himself been revealed to us in Him, as otherwise He never could be. The poverty of the Psalms in these respects, when they express, not what prophetically refers to Christ Himself, but the experiences and knowledge of an Israelite of that day, strikes one painfully indeed. We, in the midst of the full glory of divine revelation now, what instruments of praise should our hearts be! May our gracious God awaken their full music!

The soul of the psalmist leans upon the promise of God while it waits for a salvation which is yet future; and it gathers confidence from the Word in which it trusts, to answer the reproaches of the enemy. God's word he realizes to be the "word of truth," and prays that it may not be taken utterly out of his mouth, weak as he may be in standing for it: for he waits in hope for His judgments to manifest themselves.

2. The consequences are developed in the second part, which result from the realized sufficiency of Jehovah and His word. And the first, for one upon whose heart the law is written, is the joy of continuous, uninterrupted obedience to it. "For ever and aye," he says with enthusiasm. Oh for our "easy yoke" to be

(iii.) open confession.
(iv.) the voice of experience.
(v.) exercise.

I will speak also of thy testimonies before [w] kings,
and will not be ashamed.
And I will delight myself in thy commandments,
which I have [x] loved.
My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments
which I have loved;
and I will [y] meditate in thy statutes.

[w] Ps. 138. 1. *cf.* Mat. 10. 18-20.
[x] ver. 97.
[y] ver. 15.

[7] ZAYIN.

Full rest of heart.

1 (49, 50): The word of life.
(i.) the promise of God.
(ii.) the support of it.

Remember the word unto thy servant,
whereon thou hast caused me to [z] wait in hope.
This is my comfort in mine [a] affliction,
for thy word hath quickened me.

[z] vers. 74, etc. Ps. 130. 5, 6.
[a] Rom. 15. 4. *cf.* 1 Thes. 1. 6.

accepted in like manner! For him it is easy: "I will walk at liberty," he says: it is freedom to walk in ways that approve themselves to the heart,—are the choice of it; and this is our blessedness, whose "rule" is not the law, but the "new creation in Christ Jesus," the perfect and heavenly walk of the "Second Man."

The opposition of the world is realized, but without alarm. He will speak of God's testimonies before kings, and not be ashamed; and will delight himself in His commandments which he has loved. These things, I think, go together. The former is an exemplification of the latter: while the boldness of the confession of the truth maintains the joy of it also in the heart. So it ever is.

The last verse shows this delight more and more increasing, the hands (or palms) lifted up showing, as in prayer, the longing and fervor of the soul, as it implies also the realization of the depths and mysteries of that blessed Word, upon which it meditates therefore continually.

Sec. 7. (Zayin.)

The division of the eight verses in each section hitherto has been into five and three, the order of which, however, may be reversed. This first five is in the present one again divided, so that the whole psalm presents a 2, 3, 3 structure.

It is not easy always to characterize a seventh division. "Completion," for which it stands, necessarily implies "rest," because the thing is ended: the only way in which such a thought can be applied to God. The last verse here unites clearly the thoughts of accomplishment and satisfaction: "This has been mine, that I have kept Thy precepts," reminds us of the apostle's similar utterance, "I have finished my course; I have kept the faith." There is but one prayer in the section, and that about a promise now to be fulfilled, for which he is looking, and has looked. All the rest is review of the past, and that in peace of heart. Thus the heading of the section is justified in itself, and justifies its numerical place.

1. The word has been to him a word of promise,—a comforting, energizing, vivifying word. How good is it to realize it in this character! What a fullness of promise to us is there, in fact, in the word of God; and how this testifies to us of the wondrous grace of God that so displays itself! "*No good thing* will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." "They that fear the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good." How more than sufficient—how *divine* are such assurances!

True, there is affliction in fact, and much of it. "*Many* are the afflictions of the righteous." But these are either the necessary chastenings of love; because even the "righteous" are that so inconstantly; or else they are the results of what the world is in its opposition to God, and will be found to be gain in the day of account. All this will be seen then, and should be realized now, to require no abatement from the exact truth of the Word.

2 (51-53): The opposition.
(i.) persistent obedience.
(ii.) support of God's judgments.
(iii.) realized in holiness.

3 (54-56): The sanctification by it.
(i.) God's statutes psalms.
(ii.) confirmation.
(iii.) the portion realized.

The proud have had me greatly in [b]derision:
I have not declined from thy law.
I have remembered thy judgments from of [c]old, Jehovah,
and have comforted myself.
[d]Indignation hath taken hold of me,
because of the wicked who forsake thy law.

Thy [e]statutes have been my psalms
in the house of my [f]sojournings.
I have remembered thy name in the [g]night, Jehovah,
and have kept thy law.
This hath been mine,
that I have [h]kept thy precepts.

b Ps. 1. 1. Lam. 3. 14. Ps. 44. 16-18.
c *cf.* Ps. 78. 11, 42. *cf.* Is 40.28. *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 7.
d *cf.* Ezra 9. 3. *cf.* Neh. 13. 25. *cf.* Jer. 9. 1, 2.
e *ctr.* Rom. 7. 24. *cf.* Heb. 8. 8–13.
f ver. 19.
g Ps. 42. 8. Ps. 63. 6.
h ver. 4.

Nay, it is *in* the affliction that faith grows and is established, and its energizing character is found. The Word is living and life-giving; while it tests and searches us out, as with a divine search-warrant, clothed with an authority beyond any of earth, to which all earthly authority must give way. What a Word is this!

2. Yet the opposition to it is everywhere and none the less manifest. Wherever it goes it stirs up, just by its demand for righteousness and goodness, the innate resistance of the heart to good and God. So here the psalmist testifies to the derision of men that he had encountered. These were the proud, who would not suffer its rebuke. Their character revealed what was that of their opposition, and he had not declined from the law on account of it. He had read history to purpose, and remembered God's judgments of old. It was the same God now; and so he comforted himself: while, as he reflected on this falling away of man from God, indignation ("burning heat") possessed him. Well it might, indeed: for what has man's history been! Read it in the masses of heathenism to-day; and in the condition of the foremost of the so-called Christian populations.

3. He reverts to what the Word has done for him and is to him; and now he can give as to this a precious testimony. God's statutes, against which men have been thus rebelling, why, they have made *his* life music. In the house of his sojournings,—in the place of frailty, mortality, and strangership,—they have brought out of it, not merely "songs," as in our common version, but "*psalms*";—melody, and melody to God, and to which the whole creation is in profound subtle, harmonious accompaniment. How entrancing is a "Psalm of Life" so realized!

Then it will bear the soberest thought. "In the night," when earth lies in shadow, "visions of God" have been at all times most realized; then "I remembered Thy Name," he says, "and have kept Thy law."

So he finds what more and more those who have it prove to be a substantial possession: "this has been mine, that I have kept Thy precepts." By and by "the righteousnesses of the saints" will deck them even at the marriage of the Lamb; although those pure white robes will acquire their lustre only as "washed and *made* white in the blood of the Lamb." (Rev. vii. 14; xix. 8, *Gk.*)

Here, then, the first division of the psalm ends.

Div. 2.

The second division, as has been already noticed, deals more with external surroundings, the circumstances and persons favorable or adverse. This, of course, will be seen, not in all the verses, but in special, leading, dominant ones, with which the others are connected, and around which they group themselves. The apparent independency of the verses has been remarked before also, and indeed by every one who has commented on them. Nor can one by any means always prove the connection to be such as is here represented. That which is most natural and most fruitful will necessarily most commend itself to us; but it is

DIVISION 2.

The Believer, in external relationships.

[1] CHETH.

Persistent purpose.

1 (57-59): Purpose.
(i.) obedience all to me.
(ii.) and the pledged favor of God.
(iii.) the fruit of realization.

My [t]portion, I have said, Jehovah,
is to keep thy words.
I have sought thy favor with the [j]whole heart:
be gracious to me according to thy saying.
I thought upon my [k]ways,
and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.

2 (60-64): Enemies and associates.
(i.) prompt obedience.
(ii.) breaking through the cords of the wicked.
(iii.) fullness of praise.
(iv.) practical walk.
(v.) governmental ways inciting.

I have made [l]haste and not delayed
to keep thy commandments.
The cords of the wicked have been round me:
I have not [m]forgotten thy law.
At [n]midnight I rise up to give thee thanks
because of the judgments of thy righteousness.
I am a [o]companion of all that fear thee,
and of those that keep thy precepts.
The [p]earth, Jehovah, is full of thy loving-kindness;
teach me thy statutes.

t ver. 30. *cf.* Ps. 16. 5.
j ver. 10. *ctr.* Jer. 3. 10.
k Hag. 1. 5, 7. Lam. 3. 40.
l *cf.* Gen. 22. 1-3. *cf.* Prov. 25. 13.
m Ps. 44. 17, 18.
n Ps. 4. 4. Ps. 63. 5, 6. *cf.* Acts 16. 25.
o *cf.* Prov. 13. 20. *cf.* Ps. 16. 3.
p Ps. 33. 5. *cf.* Gen. 1. 31.

upon the numerical structure that we must principally depend for the discovery of this, as it will then also be large confirmation of it. The spiritual result will speak to the spiritual mind.

Sec. 1. (*Cheth.*)

1. In the first section we have, naturally, the introduction to the whole. In the first part you see the man himself; in the second, his enemies and his associates. The thing emphasized as to man is what is needed to make him master of his circumstances, that persistent purpose of heart which delivers from the temptations which ensnare and carry away the unstable. Here he begins with reaffirming what he has said just before, that his portion, what he has for himself, in contrast with the name, power, or substance of which others might boast, is to be a keeper of Jehovah's words. And this truly brings a great revenue. Here one finds that for which His word is pledged, a favor better than life, and every way worthy as an object of pursuit with the whole heart.

This had been to the psalmist also the fruit of his coming to himself. He had thought upon his own ways, a sad enough but profitable contemplation. Thus with clear understanding of what he was turning from, he turned, not his eyes merely, but his feet unto those divine "testimonies," which ever appear more self-evidencing as there is self-judgment as to the paths that lead away from them. So he came then to realize what is indeed reality.

2. He can now speak of having followed with prompt, unhesitating decision, the new path thus found. But here, too, is the opposition of the wicked, manifested in snares set to entangle his feet; spite of which he has gone on his way unhindered. And in the night his heart would run over with a praise which he had to rise up to express, on account of the righteousness of divine judgments,—the perfect moral way in which every question received its settlement through these.

With those that feared Jehovah he took his place. Oneness of mind drew these together, as it necessarily will do; and a man becomes known by the company he keeps. Associations are also a part of the ways by which we approve ourselves or not to God, and are insisted on, as we know, at the very threshold of the whole book. (Ps. i. 1.) In close walking with those that fear the Lord, the experiences and joys of each become a common blessing of all. They are multiplied in being shared together.

1 (65-67): Good and evil thus in harmony.
(i.) Jehovah's faithfulness.
(ii.) the response of faith.
(iii) recovery.

2 (68-72): The service of evil.
(i.) God consistent ever.
(ii.) false accusation.
(iii). inner reality.
(iv.) the experience of affliction.
(v.) the recompense.

[2] TETH.

Things working together for good.

Thou hast dealt [q] well, Jehovah, with thy servant,
according to thy word.
Teach me good judgment and knowledge:
for I have [r] believed thy commandments.
Before I was [s] afflicted I went astray,
but now I have kept thy saying.

Thou art [t] good and doest good:
teach me thy statutes.
The proud have forged a [u] lie against me:
I keep thy precepts with the whole heart.
Their heart is as fat as grease:
for me, I [v] delight in thy law.
It is [w] good for me that I have been afflicted;
that I might learn thy statutes.
The law of thy mouth is better unto me
than thousands of [x] gold and silver.

q *cf.* ver. 17. *cf.* Josh. 23. 14.
r ver. 89. *ctr.* Deut. 9. 23.
s ver. 71. *cf.* Deut. 32. 15. Jer. 31. 18, 19.
t Ps. 34. 8. Ps. 145. 9.
u Ps. 27. 12. Ps. 35. 11.
v vers. 16, 35.
w ver. 67. Heb. 12. 5-11. Jas. 1. 12.
x Ps. 19. 10. ver. 127. Prov. 8. 10, 11, 19.

And "the earth is full of Jehovah's loving-kindness," who makes all things work together for good to His own. This looks on to what we find in the next section,—one of those connecting links which are so frequent in the Psalms. The joy of this loving-kindness realized in the soul becomes in it a fervent desire to be taught His statutes.

Sec. 2. (*Teth.*)

The working together of all things for good is the theme of the next section. Good and evil in this checkered scene are thus seen to be in harmony; and the work of the enemy is even made, spite of itself, to be a minister of the good. These are in fact the two divisions of this section.

1. The psalmist approves thoroughly, in looking back, Jehovah's faithfulness in his case. He has been truly the covenant-God, and has dealt well, and only well, with His servant: according to His word so freely pledged to him. Faith responds fully to this on his part, owning the need of divine teaching, and which implies much more than the lesson-book, for scholars whose unaptness is so much a moral condition. The rod has been surely among the "all things" working good to all the people of God; and so he who speaks here has found it. "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now I have kept Thy saying."

2. But this may have only to do with physical evil; the deeper question is the moral evil, and the second part of the section takes up this. In Eden man's perfection was to abide in good where evil was not, and to be a stranger to this altogether. Now, on the contrary, it is in having the "senses exercised to discern between good and evil"; both being before him. (Heb. v. 14.) The presence of evil aronnd is therefore permitted with this end in view; and in ourselves we come into nearer contact with it, and learn to hate it with corresponding energy. In all this we find One over all who *is* good and *does* good; whose acts are truly accordant with His nature. Joy indeed is it, then, to be tanght His statutes, which enlighten the conscience and preserve moral vision. In the darkness of the cave the organ of sight is well known to atrophy from mere disuse.

The psalmist is suffering from the slander of men, whose character is clearly to be seen as the proud: men that have a spirit of rebellion against restraint, literally, that boil up, like water. The mere subjection of the heart to God rouses the opposition of such, who traduce what they have no mind to imitate. In answer to which he affirms his whole-hearted observance of the precepts of Jehovah. But *their* heart is as fat as grease; the grossness of their nature hindering all right affections: "for me," he says, "I delight in Thy law."

3 JOD.

Recognitions.

1 (73-75): Foundations. (i.) a Creator-God. (ii.) the communion of faith. (iii.) the holiness of divine judgments.

Thy hands have [y] made me and fashioned me:
give me understanding that I may learn thy commandments.
They that fear thee are [z] glad when they see me,
because I have waited in hope on thy word.
I know, Jehovah, that thy judgments are right,
and that thou in [a] faithfulness hast afflicted me.

y *cf.* Job 10. 8. Ps. 138. 8. *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 19.
z ver. 63. Ps. 34. 2. *cf.* Ps. 69. 6.
a Heb. 12. 10. *cf.* 1 Cor. 11. 31, 32.

And the very affliction through which he has passed has been serviceable to him in making him learn more deeply the character of those statutes, from the violation of which he has himself suffered. How certainly we learn in this way all must be aware. In result, the law of Jehovah's mouth has acquired for him a value beyond that of earthly riches: it is his real possession.

Sec. 3. (*Jod.*)

The theme of the third section of the second division much resembles that of the first, which we have considered. Yet there is a difference; and that according to the respective characters of the divisions themselves. It is for this reason that "recognitions" seems a more suited title here than "realizations." The soul is more upon the outlook. Circumstances and men are more before it: and these both for and against,—the brotherhood of faith upon the one hand, and the adversaries on the other. The first part, I take it, gives us certain foundations or broad facts which are clearly recognizable; the second, reckonings of faith which deal with the future rather than the present, and in which confidence takes the form of prayer.

1. The basis-fact here is that of a Creator-God, who cannot therefore but be for the work of His hands. His hands have made us, and not rudely; but fashioned us so as to be witnesses of His handiwork. He must design, then, to have His creature filling the place for which He made him, and will surely not deny the understanding necessary to this. This is an argument which the 139th psalm dwells upon at large, and which the New Testament for the Christian puts in the strongest possible way. Here we can speak of *new* creation, and of the word of God as that by which He has begotten us to Himself. No fear that He may deny it to us. To us it is as milk to a new-born babe — the one necessity of its nature.

Of new birth the Old Testament did not yet speak; but men had need of it none the less, and came thus into a communion which, though not yet marked off externally from the mass, was necessarily distinguished by the characteristics of the new spiritual life which had been received. And this is the second basis-fact here. As the first touched the centre of the circle,—ascertained the *whence* of relationship, though not with the clearness of present knowledge, so the second defines the circumference, the *with whom*, the family. And they recognize one another also, as belonging to a company known even then as a family of faith. So the psalmist says here: "they that fear Thee are glad when they see me,"—there is a joyful glance of recognition. And here is the mark by which they recognize: "because I have waited in hope on Thy word."

But there is a third thing now; and this assures us of a Living Presence, not simply at the beginning or in the past, but abiding throughout human history, faithful to His own nature, which is holy, and to His people in His dealings with them. "I know, Jehovah, that Thy judgments are right, and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me." Thus, in these three things, God, His people, and the relationship between them, are all recognized; and His word is authoritative over them, their joyful confidence, and that to which His acts at all times are found correspondent.

2. The psalmist now pours out his heart to God, whom he knows, and who is

2 (76-80): Dependences. (i.) for faithfulness to promise. (ii.) preserving mercies. (iii.) holiness manifested. (iv.) experimental proof. (v.) the way as the end.

Let, I pray thee, thy loving-kindness be for my [b] comfort,
according to thy saying unto thy servant.
Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may [c] live:
for thy law is my delight.
Let the proud be [d] ashamed:
for they have acted perversely in falsehood toward me:
for me, I [e] meditate on thy precepts.
Let those that fear thee [f] turn unto me,
and those that know thy testimonies.
Let my heart be [g] perfect in thy statutes,
that I be not ashamed.

b ver. 50. cf. Is. 40. 1.
c cf. Ps. 118. 17 with Ps. 6. 5.
d Ps. 25. 3. Ps. 70. 2, 3.
e ver. 23.
f ver. 63. cf. Ps. 54. 4.
g Ps. 15. 2. Ps. 18. 23. ver. 1.

[4] CAPH.

In trial from man.

1 (81-83): Integrity. (i.) the only foundation.

My soul [h] fainteth for thy salvation:
I wait in hope on thy word.

h ver. 123. Ps. 84. 2. Ps. 42. 1.

so necessary to him. He prays that His loving-kindness may be his comfort, according to His promise to him. For God has pledged Himself to His people: it has not sufficed Him to say "Ye know me, and that I cannot err or do wrong; and let this be enough for you." We are too frail, too dim-sighted, too little able to anticipate His ways, for this to satisfy us, or to satisfy Him as to us. Divine love has therefore pledged itself to us, made its covenant with man, and swears, if His word is not enough: "that by two immutable things"—His word and His oath"—"we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." (Heb. vi. 17, 18.)

We may have "boldness," therefore, in coming to what is characterized for us as a "throne of grace" (ch. iv. 16), to find help for all the way which is *His* way for us. For any other way we could neither expect nor rightly desire it. Thus the force of "according to Thy word unto Thy *servant*" here. For prayer is crippled, confidence as to it gone, if our wills are struggling in it against God's will.

And this is the argument of the next verse also: "For Thy law is my delight." His tender mercies, therefore, can be freely shown; so necessary as they are for life itself in a world of conflict,—so necessary for the invigoration of spiritual life. This brings him to the conflict: and he prays that the proud, the independent asserters of their own will, may be ashamed: their own will proving itself in his case to be mere perversity and falsehood; while for him the divine precepts were his meditation.

Thus would God's holiness be manifested in the presence of those who feared Him, and who would have in him—in God's ways with him—experimental proof of this, to which they might turn, with His testimonies in their hand thus fully corroborated. Nor can it be in haughtiness on his own side that he claims this. Nay, he has need of the mercy of God to be shown to himself also, that his heart may be made perfect in His statutes, that he himself may not be ashamed.

Sec. 4. (*Caph.*)

The fourth section speaks of the trial from man, which had reached almost the extreme point. The first part, of his integrity under it; the second, of the persecution itself, on account of which the psalmist appeals to God. Throughout, His faithful word is that to which he cleaves and which is his support, while yet the hand of God has not interposed to put an end to the trial.

1. In the extreme of necessity, his soul fainting for the deliverance which can be from God alone, His word is that upon which in hope he waits. Plenty of

(ii.) the delay.
(iii.) yet remembering.

Mine eyes [i]fail for thy saying:
saying, When wilt thou comfort me?
For I am become like a bottle in the smoke:
I have not [j]forgotten thy statutes.

2 (84–88): Persecution.
(i.) Thy time?
(ii.) against God and man.
(iii.) the sanctuary refuge.
(iv.) almost consumed.
(v.) capacity for responsibility.

How many are the days of thy servant?
[k]when wilt thou execute judgment on those that persecute me?
The proud have dug [l]pits for me,
which are not after thy law.
All thy commandments are faithful:
they [m]persecute me wrongfully; help thou me!
They had [n]almost consumed me upon earth,
but *I* forsook not thy precepts.
[o]Quicken me after thy loving-kindness,
and I shall keep the testimony of thy mouth.

[5]LAMED.

But with God who governs.

1 (89–93): Whose word is law: (i.) stable in the heavens. (his throne.) (ii.) and by which the dependent earth is established.

For ever, Jehovah,
thy word [p]stands fast in the heavens.
Thy faithfulness is unto [q]all generations:
thou hast established the earth, that it may abide.

i Ps. 69 3. Is. 38. 14.
j ver. 16.
k Ps. 6. 3. Ps. 13. 1, 2. *cf.* Rev. 6. 10.
l Ps. 35. 7. *cf.* Ps. 9.15.
m ver. 78. Ps. 38. 19. *cf.* Jno. 15. 25.
n Ps. 94. 17. Ps. 124.1–5. *cf.* Matt. 24. 9, 10, 22.
o vers. 25, 37, 40, 107, 149, 156, 159. Hab. 3. 2. *cf.* Job 36.6. Ps. 71. 20. *cf.* Hos. 6.2. *cf.* Hos.14.7.
p Ps. 89. 2. Matt.24.35.
q Ps. 89. 2. Is. 25. 1.

comfort there, which yet necessitates a living God to make it good. For this it fearlessly pledges Him, but the pledge sometimes seems long in being redeemed. Hence the room for exercise, which after all is not against faith,—which supposes it, and in it finds its only means of existence: for faith has to do with that which is not seen.

The pressure has been great, however: he has been dried up, like a skin bottle in the smoke, while yet he has not by all this been made to forget Jehovah's statutes.

2. But he feels the briefness of his days, and pleads for the judgment which is needed for the fulfillment to Israel of their earthly promises. When shall that time be? Here the prophecies of those times and seasons, which from us are hidden as to definite fulfillment (Acts i. 7), in the present Christian gap of time, will open up to them abundant comfort (Dan. xii. 4, 9). Meanwhile the pits of the proud yawn before them, unchecked by Jewish law. The psalmist thinks of those commandments which in their maintenance of righteousness necessarily imply a God who will be faithful to the righteous, so that he can plead them as if they were promises—"*faithful* commandments." And to these he, too, has striven to be faithful: he seeks therefore his sanctuary shelter from those that persecute him wrongfully. Almost consumed upon earth, he has not forsaken the divine precepts; for which yet he realizes his need of quickening, that he may keep the testimonies of His mouth.

Sec. 5. (*Lamed.*)

As generally in a fifth section, now, after the pressure of trial has been felt in its bitterness, the joyful sense of the supremacy of God rises in fresh power upon the soul. God rules, when winds and waves are at their worst; and His word, upon which alone we can rest amid the confusion, is that which is law everywhere, while by the sense of its glorious perfection it attaches the soul to Him with an indissoluble bond. These are the two parts that are found here.

1. In the heavens above His word stands firm for ever, as illustrated, no doubt, by the stars that roll in their circuits, the sun and the moon that keep their ordered path. The earth, too, is established,—in relation, I suppose, to the sea, in which the foundations of the dry land are, spite of the restless warfare of the

(iii.) the realized fulfillment.
(iv.) creature experience of it.
(v.) living by it to God.

They do [r]abide this day according to thine ordinances:
for all are thy [s]servants.
Unless thy law had been my delight,
I should then have [t]perished in mine affliction.
I will [u]never forget thy precepts:
for by them thou hast quickened me.

2 (94-96): And attaches the soul to Him.
(i.) be for me, who am for Thee,
(ii.) spite of enemies;
(iii.) the fullness of the Word.

I am [v]thine; save me,
for I have [w]sought thy precepts.
The wicked have waited for me to [x]destroy me:
[but] I attend unto thy testimonies.
I have seen an [y]end of all perfection:
thy commandment is exceeding [z]broad.

[6] MEM.

Overcoming in wisdom.

1 (97-101): The power of the Word.
(i.) its constant sufficiency.
(ii.) progress beyond enemies.

Oh how I [a]love thy law!
it is my [b]meditation all the day.
Thou through thy commandments hast made me [c]wiser than mine enemies:
for they are ever with me.

r *cf.* Jer. 31. 35–37. *cf.* Jer. 33. 20–26.
s Ps. 33. 9. *cf.* Ps. 148. 8. *cf.* Is. 38. 8.
t ver. 87.
u *cf.* Ps. 85. 8. *cf.* Is. 26. 13.
v Ps. 79. 13. *cf.* Is. 43. 1.
w *cf.* Prov. 2. 3–5. *cf.* Jer. 15. 16.
x Ps. 10. 8–10. *cf.* Ps. 71. 10, 11.
y *cf.* Gen. 6. 13. *cf.* Job 42. 5, 6 with Is. 2. 22.
z *cf.* Deut. 6. 5 with Jas. 2. 10. *cf.* Phil. 3. 12.
a *ctr.* Ps. 52. 3, 4. ver. 24.
b Ps. 1. 2. c Deut. 4. 6-8; *cf.* Matt. 4. 4, 7, 10; *cf.* Matt. 22. 15–46; *cf.* Lk. 21. 15.

sea upon them, fixed abidingly. There they all remain, servants of God in their several spheres, a permanent condition of things, amid all the apparent susceptibility to change, showing everywhere the impress of a governing hand.

In the soul God's law likewise proves its sustaining power, acting in a very different way, yet so as to manifest the divine virtue that is in it. As law it brings in the assertion of sovereignty to which the conscience responds with its homage, and the heart with its delight. Thus then, spite of the felt disorder, God is; and the soul is cheered and energized, and that which has done this remains in its unique effect, impossible to be forgotten. *One lives by it to God.*

2. This introduces the second part, the psalmist turning to Him who is thus made known with the declaration of his devotion and of his need. It is not merely a cry forced from him by outward distress: "I have sought," he says, "Thy precepts." And this, though the wicked had desired and plotted for his destruction, clearly for his adherence to them: "I attend unto Thy testimonies."

Then his whole heart opens out. He has looked out upon all human perfection and seen in every particular how limited it is. Easy enough to find everywhere an end in this way; but to the word of God, controlling him as his commandment, he has found none: "it is exceeding broad": like space itself it has no boundary-wall; but it has an infinite fullness, not an emptiness,—an infinite speech, and not a silence. It is the speech of God.

Sec. 6. (*Mem.*)

He proceeds to show how this word of God, itself so supreme, has lifted him up by its inherent power into a supreme place among men. It is divine knowledge that he gets by it, beyond the capacity of any man at his best. Nay, man's wisdom is so opposed to God's that the gaining of this knowledge is a true "overcoming," the sifting and analyzing and separation of true from false, always with a moral interest also, or, to say better, a spiritual. "Wisdom" has necessarily always this character in her, as the "fool" is he who "hath said in his heart, There is no God."

1. The psalmist begins by once more expressing his delight in the law: it gives him constant occupation. "all the day." Let us remember that it is one who can speak so, who can tell us of the wisdom it has communicated to him. We shall not, perhaps, get the same results without some similar devotion to it; and

(iii.) beyond special gift.
(iv.) beyond natural experience.
(v.) exercised to walk with God.

I have more understanding than all my [d]teachers:
for thy testimonies are my meditation.
I discern more than the [e]elders:
because I keep thy precepts.
I have [f]refrained my feet from every evil path,
that I may keep thy word.

[d] *cf.* 1 Jno. 2. 27. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 19–21.
[e] *cf.* Job 32. 7–9. *cf.* Lk. 10. 24.
[f] ver. 9. Prov. 1. 15. Prov. 4. 27.

yet the estimate has no touch of exaggeration in it. If it be God's word, what can all the wisdom outside it be, compared with that? In the perfect knowledge of our need,—with perfect love and perfect ability to meet it,—what must we say, even in anticipation of inquiry, such a book must be?

Yet, must we not fear that there are few who give it even now the day and night study which the psalmist gave to his so much smaller and poorer Bible?

Let us listen, then, to his account of the result, with the remembrance of the almost unspeakable difference in our minds. It is of the law in the main he speaks; and though we must not limit that, wherever we hear of it, just to the ten commandments, or even to the Mosaic institutions as a whole, yet it is plain that it is in fact largely of this that he is thinking here. "Law," "commandments," "keeping" God's "precepts," "refraining the feet," show this quite clearly; and it is spiritual ethics with which he is, at least, very largely concerned. To make this evangelical, we have only to remember that the Mosaic law had very definite teaching as to what sin was before God, and of the impossibility of a sinner approaching Him without the blood of atonement. This, too, was ethics, if it was much more. It was this in the highest sense; and there would be none, except it were an ethics of despair, without it. But an ethics of despair is really none.

Enemies the psalmist has, and that on account of the law of his God; but this makes him wiser than all of them. Necessarily; if "iniquity" is, as Scripture calls it, "vanity," and ignorance of God is "folly," and the government of the world is one that makes for righteousness. Thus the enemies of the righteous can neither understand God, nor the world, nor the men they have to deal with; and even the hearts of their fellows, and their own hearts, are most unreliable quantities: "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know" them?

But more than this: the testimonies of God being his meditation, he is wiser than all his teachers. And notable it is how rapidly the mind awakens and is strengthened and enlarged under the influence of Scripture. The countries in possession of an "open Bible" may be traced by the comparative intellectual gain in other directions, as is well known; and yet even this does not give a just idea of the Bible in its power as the true educator of the human race. For, alas, where the heart is not possessed by it for God, men refuse submission to the light itself, and thus in the places of greatest enlightenment there is yet an undercurrent at least of opposition to it. Nay, more, among those who are genuinely converted by it, how few receive the word of God in the whole-hearted manner of the psalmist here! It is not too much to say that for most Christians even, the blank pages of their Bibles are more numerous than the full ones; the sun is half darkened by the spots upon it.

Received fully, whole-heartedly, unreservedly,—allowed to do all the work of which it is capable,—mind, heart, conscience alike submitted to its restorative, invigorating, divinely quickening influence, what equal development would there not be of every human faculty! what light shed upon Nature, history, every question of right interest possible to man! Take all the men of special gift, the aptest to receive, the most fitted to communicate knowledge, yet uncontrolled by Scripture in what they affirm,—after all, the poor man uneducated otherwise, cleaving only to the Word, may truly and unaffectedly say with the psalmist, "I have more understanding than all my teachers: for Thy testimonies are my meditation."

2 (102-104): Attraction and separation. (i) God Himself the teacher. (ii.) the sweetness of the teaching. (iii.) holiness of truth.

I have not [g]departed from thy judgments.
for *thou* hast taught me.
How [h]sweet are thy sayings to my taste!
[sweeter] than honey to my mouth!
Through thy precepts I get discernment:
therefore I [i]hate every false way.

[g] *cf.* Ps. 18. 21. *ctr.* Jer. 18. 14, 15.
[h] Ps. 19. 10. *cf.* Ezek. 3. 1-3. *cf.* Rev. 10. 9, 10.
[i] ver. 128. *cf.* Ps. 45. 7.

[7] NUN.

Complete obedience in view of all circumstances.

1 (105, 106): Steadfast purpose. (i.) truth known. (ii.) cleaving to God's judgments.

Thy word is a [j]lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path.
I have sworn, and will [k]perform it,
to keep the judgments of thy righteousness.

[j] *cf.* Ps. 19. 8. *cf.* Prov. 6. 23 with Matt. 6. 22.
[k] ver. 93. *cf.* Ps. 56. 12. *cf.* Neh. 5. 12, 13.

2 (107-109): Maintained through adversity. (i.) which claims promised energy. (ii.) and to be taught His judgments. (iii.) the law remembered.

I am [l]afflicted very sore.
Jehovah, quicken me according to thy word.
Accept, Jehovah, I pray thee, the [m]free-will offerings of my mouth:
and teach me thy judgments.
My life is [n]continually in my hand:
but I do not forget thy law.

[l] ver. 75. Ps. 25. 16. *cf.* Zeph. 3. 12 with Matt. 5. 3.
[m] *cf.* Ps. 51. 18, 19. *cf.* Mal. 3. 3, 4.
[n] *cf.* 1 Sam. 20. 3. *cf.* Job 13. 14; *cf.* 2 Cor. 1. 8-10.

So with the "elders," the men of long experience: clearly this is all too limited, in duration, in sphere of application, in inherent capacity, to be put for a moment in comparison with the knowledge derivable from the word of God. But notice all through, how there is insisted on the practical nature of its requirements as to the condition of all such knowledge being imparted: "I discern more than the elders, *because I keep Thy precepts.*"

And he closes all this with "I have refrained my feet from every evil way: that I may keep Thy word."

2. And now we see the character of this "overcoming" from another side: the attractive and separative power of the Word, moving the affections as well as regulating the walk. One of the first necessities for which is the assurance of that direct contact in the Word between God and the soul which the next verse expresses: "I have not departed from Thy judgments: for *Thou* hast taught me." Here is the simple "book," become the divine "oracle": God has indeed spoken in it; what an inexpressible joy to have heard the voice of God! God speaking! and to me! How the heart is moved by it! "How sweet are Thy sayings to my taste! sweeter than honey to my mouth!" And this attraction is necessary repulsion from the opposite pole: "through Thy precepts I get discernment: therefore I *hate* every false way." All this is so simple as to require no comment.

Sec. 7. (*Nun.*)

The seventh section carries this out to full obedience in spirit, though with the consciousness of much infirmity and constant need of God. It seems to divide, exactly as the seventh of the first division, into 2,3,3; the ordinary five verses of the larger part being again divided, precisely as there.

1. We have first the steadfast purpose of heart which underlies all true obedience. And this is based upon the consciousness of what the Word is,—a light shining amid the darkness of the world, and which reveals the footpath, sure if narrow, through it. The path is not dark, if the world is; and the wayfarer resolvedly undertakes it: he will keep the judgments of righteousness, the decisions of God as to good and evil which largely (but not wholly) define his way.

2. The opposition of man brings him into continual peril: affliction which has but too much power over him. He realizes and pleads his need of divine energy, which has been pledged to him, indeed, so that he can reckon upon it. Thus he

3 (110-112): Realization.
(i.) unswerving obedience.
(ii.) attachment to God's testimonies.
(iii.) heart-fulfillment.

The wicked have laid a [o]snare for me:
but I have not erred from thy precepts.
Thy testimonies have I taken as a [p]heritage for ever:
for they are the rejoicing of my heart.
I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes,
for ever—[q]unto the end.*

DIVISION 3.

In contemplation of divine holiness.

[1]SAMECH.

The rebellious.

1 (113-115): The choice of the righteous.
(i.) integrity.
(ii.) confidence in dependence.
(iii.) separation to God.

I hate the [r]double-minded:
and I love thy law.
Thou art my [s]hiding-place and my shield:
I wait in hope on thy word.
Depart from me, ye [t]evil-doers:
for I will keep the commandments of my God.

2 (116-120): Division between the diverse.
(i.) a plea to the faithful One.
(ii.) assured security.

Uphold me, according to thy saying, that I may live:
and let me not be [u]ashamed of my hope.
[v]Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe;
and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually.

o Ps. 35. 7. Ps. 141. 9. *cf.* Jer. 18. 20, 22.
p *cf.* ver. 57. *cf.* Deut. 33. 4.
q ver. 33. *cf.* Jno. 17. 4. *cf.* 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8.
r *cf.* Ju. 5. 15. *cf.* Jas. 1. 6-8. *cf.* 1 Ki. 18. 21 with Lk. 11. 23.
s Ps. 27. 5. Ps. 32. 7.
t Ps. 6. 8. Ps. 26. 4. *cf.* Jer. 15. 17.
u Ps. 25. 2. *cf.* Is. 45. 17. *cf.* Rom. 5. 5.
v Ps. 73. 23. Is. 41. 13, 14.

[1] "heel," as verse 33.

can bring the free-will offerings of his mouth, the recognition of help given, and still pray to be taught Jehovah's judgments. And through the peril he passes, not distracted into forgetfulness of that which abides in its supremacy over him, the law of his God.

3. He advances further, to speak of more positive attainment. The snare of the wicked had not made him swerve from the path of divine precept. Yea, his whole portion, his chosen inheritance was the testimonies of God. They were the rejoicing of his heart, which he had inclined to perform them for ever,—"to the end," or thoroughly, without reserve.

DIV. 3.

The third division seems to emphasize the holiness of God. The enemies are looked at more as the enemies of God than personally such, and the exercises have correspondingly their character less with regard to external trouble: in this respect the third division returns toward the first.

Sec. 1. (*Samech.*)

In the first section, accordingly, the rebellions are looked at in their character and conduct, as abhorrent to God and man. The righteous turn from them, and God puts them away in judgment from the earth; and this is, roughly, the two parts of the psalm.

1. "I hate the double-minded," begins the psalmist; "and I love Thy law." His own integrity of heart cannot abide the wavering of those who at one moment are for Jehovah, at another for Baal; who have therefore no true conviction, but in the conflict of opinion follow only their own wills. For himself his heart is in the path of obedience; and more, he has the experience of what it is to have Jehovah his hiding-place and shield,—a living God making Himself known in the day of trial, so that His word becomes his confidence. From evil-doers his path necessarily separates; for he is set to keep the commandments of his God.

2. He turns to Him in the consciousness of dependence, with the word pledged to him, which makes him hope in it, and beseeching Him that it may not leave

(iii.) the holiness of the ban.
(iv.) the vanity and passing away of evil.
(v.) the exercise resulting.

Thou hast trodden down all that err from thy statutes:
for their laxity is [w]falsehood.
Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like [x]dross:
therefore I love thy testimonies.
My flesh [y]trembleth for fear of thee,
and I am afraid of thy judgments.

[w] Jer.14.14. *cf.* 2Thes.2. 9, 10.
[x] Is. 1. 22. Jer. 6. 28–30. Ezek.22.18.
[y] Jer. 23. 9. Hab. 3. 16. *cf.* 2 Cor. 5. 11.

1 (121-123): On the ground of righteousness. (i.) put me not in their power. (ii.) be my surety against oppression. (iii.) fulfill Thy word.

[2] AYIN.

Deliverance sought from them.

I have done judgment and righteousness:
[z]leave me not to mine oppressors!
Be [a]surety for thy servant for good:
let not the proud oppress me!
Mine eyes [b]fail for thy salvation;
and for the saying of thy righteousness.

[z] Ps. 71. 9, 18. *cf.* Ps. 41.2.
[a] *cf.* Is.38.14. *cf.* Is.43.1-5.
[b] vers.81,82. *cf.* Is. 38.14.

2 (124-128): For Thy servant. (i.) be like Thyself. (ii.) the discernment needed by a servant sought. (iii.) Jehovah's time accomplished. (iv.) the test of experience. (v.) the end of exercise.

Do with thy servant [c]according to thy loving-kindness:
and teach me thy statutes.
I am thy servant: give me [d]discernment,
that I may know thy testimonies.
It is [e]time for Jehovah to act:
they have made void thy law.
Therefore I love thy commandments
[f]above gold, yea, above fine gold.
Therefore I regard [g]all [thy] precepts concerning all things to be right:
I hate every false path.

[c] Ps. 25. 7. Ps. 51. 1.
[d] *cf.* 1 Ki.3.9. *cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 14–16.
[e] *cf.* Is.26.10, 11. Ps. 21. 9. *cf.* Jer.6.15.
[f] Ps. 19. 10. ver. 72.
[g] *cf.* Mat. 5. 18. 2 Tim.3.16, 17.

him to be ashamed. Confident he is that he is secure who is upheld by God; and this safety he would use to run unhindered continually in the path of His will.

From his shelter he looks out to see the judgment fall upon all that go astray from the path: for their laxity—"letting fall," like the string of a deceitful bow—is falsehood: not failure where the heart may yet be right. Thus God treats them, not as silver which may yet have to be purified from dross, but as dross itself and nothing else. The psalmist sees and approves this judgment, and so clings the more to those testimonies which deliver from the way of destruction; while his flesh trembles with awe at the holiness of God, and he is afraid as he realizes His righteous judgments.

Sec. 2. (*Ayin.*)

1. Yet he is in fact still among the enemies of God's way, and who are therefore necessarily also the enemies of His people; and he seeks deliverance from these on the ground of that very righteousness. He has himself followed it; and he prays therefore not to be left in the hand of his oppressors. May He, the righteous One, be as that, surety for good to one who is His servant, and not permit the oppression of the proud, who because of pride refuse the servant's place. God's pledged word he has, but His salvation lingers, and in distress his eyes fail for longing for it.

2. He pleads the servant's place that he has taken, that he may be dealt with in divine love, and taught His statutes. For he is His servant, and as such needs and may urge that he needs, discernment to know the testimonies that he has to maintain amid a state of daring rebellion which speaks for the time being come for Jehovah's own intervention. But this disorder only makes him realize the more the value of those commandments which are more to him than the wealth of much and purest gold. For here all is pure,—every precept, whatever it concerns; and every false way is exposed to reprobation.

1 (129-131): The power of the knowledge. (i.) the ground of obedience. (ii.) discernment by the Word. (iii.) the heart told out.

2 (132-136): Desires stirred. (i.) constant grace. (ii.) establishment in freedom from sin's bondage. (iii.) sanctuary shelter. (iv.) and experience. (v.) exercise.

1 (137-141): The rule and the rebellion. (i.) Jehovah righteous and His judgments. (ii.) and His testimonies.

[3] PE.

Sanctuary-revelations.

Thy testimonies are [h] wonderful:
  therefore my soul observeth them.
The opening of thy words giveth [i] light:
  it giveth discernment to the simple.
I opened my mouth wide and panted:
  for I [j] longed for thy commandments.

Turn to me, and be gracious to me,
  as [thy] [k] wont is to those that love thy name.
Establish my steps in thy saying,
  and let not any iniquity have [l] dominion over me.
Deliver me from the [m] oppression of man,
  and I will keep thy precepts.
Make thy face to [n] shine upon thy servant,
  and teach me thy statutes.
Mine eyes run down with [o] streams of water,
  because they keep not thy law.

[4] TZADDI.

The trial from defection.

Righteous art thou, Jehovah,
  and [p] upright are thy judgments.
Thou hast commanded thy testimonies in righteousness,
  and in very [q] faithfulness.

h ver. 14. *cf.* Is.28.29. *cf.* Ps.139.6.
i vers. 98-100. *cf.* Lk.24.45. *cf.* Acts 8. 27-35.
j vers.20,40.
k *cf.* Ps. 37. 25. *cf.* Job 36.7.
l Ps. 19. 13. *cf.* Rom. 6. 12, 14.
m Jer. 6.6,7. *cf.* Is.54.11-17.
n Ps. 4. 6. Ps. 80. 3, 7, 19.
o Jer. 9. 1. *cf.* Luke 19. 41-44. *cf.* Rom. 9. 1-3.
p *cf.* Ezek. 18. 25-30. Ps. 97. 2.
q ver. 86. Is. 25. 1.

Sec. 3. (*Pe.*)

In the third section the psalmist turns to speak more of the joy in Jehovah's testimonies that he has found, of the revelation that they have been to him. All his heart is awake with longing after God Himself, to whom His word brings, as its power is known; and thus this is a true sanctuary portion, although it be more longed for than enjoyed. Yet the door is opening, has partially opened, and the inner light is already breaking out.

1. Wonderful are the testimonies of God, which by their glorious character win the soul to their obedience. Light breaks out as the Word is opened up; and even the simple acquire by it the faculty of discernment. The heart is drawn out in longings which are not lawless, but the very contrary: "I longed for Thy commandments."

Thus the Word as an educator makes no monsters. It does not develop the intellect, while leaving the heart and conscience unaffected; but the whole man grows in beautiful correspondence of all parts to one another.

2. The soul thus wrought upon becomes a seeker after God, in the apprehension of constant grace which is shown to all who love His name,—that is, the manifestation of Himself; for that is what His name is. Such an one realizes what the liberty is of walking in God's ways, and the miserable bondage which results from any iniquity having dominion over one. From man, too, he seeks to be free, in order to keep the divine precepts. Above all, to walk in the sunshine of God's face, as one brought near, and there to be taught His statutes. There it is that the awful horror of sin is felt, with the longing after men who know not its deformity: "Mine eyes run down with streams of water, because they keep not Thy law."

Sec. 4. (*Tsaddi.*)

The last verse contains in it, as not uncommonly, the theme very much of the following section. In it we have the trial of spirit from the defection around,

(iii.) devoted self-sacrifice in view of defection. (iv.) the voice of experience. (v.) the weak with the Strong.

My [r]zeal consumeth me,
because mine adversaries have forgotten thy words.
Thy word is exceeding [s]pure,
and thy servant loveth it.
I am [t]small and despised:
[but] I have not forgotten thy precepts.

2 (142–144): Faith's assurance. (i.) unchanging righteousness. (ii.) sorrow and delight. (iii.) realization needed.

Thy righteousness is [u]eternal righteousness,
and thy law is truth.
Trouble and [v]anguish have taken hold upon me:
thy commandments are my delight.
The righteousness of thy testimonies is eternal:
give me discernment and I shall [w]live.

[5]KOPH.

Exercises.

1 (145–149): As to the truth. (i.) wholehearted. (ii.) salvation needed.

I have called with my [x]whole heart:
answer me, Jehovah, I will keep thy statutes.
I have called upon thee:
[y]save me, and I will keep thy testimonies.

r *cf.* Ps. 69. 9. *cf.* Jno. 2. 17. *cf.* Jer. 20. 8, 9.
s Ps. 12. 6. Ps. 19. 8. Prov. 30. 5.
t *cf.* Ps. 70. 5. *cf.* Ju. 6. 15. *cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 26–29.
u ver. 144. Is. 51. 8. *cf.* Dan. 9. 24.
v *cf.* Ps. 94. 19. *cf.* 2 Cor. 4. 16.
w *cf.* Ps. 118. 17. *cf.* Ps. 72. 14.
x vers. 10, 34.
y Ps. 71. 2, 3. *cf.* Ezek. 36. 29. *cf.* 2 Tim. 1. 9.

along with that abiding sense of preciousness of the Word itself, which is what makes the defection so full of anguish.

1. Jehovah's word is what Jehovah is: if He is righteous, so are His judgments. And so too are His testimonies, of whatever nature: He cannot be aught but a faithful witness, in whatever it has pleased Him to give any testimony.

Here, as he thinks of it, the psalmist's zeal breaks out: it consumes him as the altar-flame the sacrifice; as with Christ in the temple, where He flames out in a testimony against the evil, which puts Him in opposition to the heads of the people, identified with the wickedness that was then in power. It is not with the psalmist that men are his adversaries merely, but "because mine adversaries have forgotten Thy words."

That leads him back to think of the Word, how pure it is, and how he loves it. Little he is, it is true — he who has this spirit is ever little — and despised, for so has the mass got away from God that they can afford to despise such feeble opposition: yet he clings with all this to that which links his feebleness with the Lord of all: "I have not forgotten Thy precepts."

2. And faith affirms, amid the confusion in which all might seem buried, Jehovah's righteousness to be eternal righteousness, and His law truth which must always then abide truth. Trouble and anguish possess him, as he thinks of the madness of the adversaries; but this does not bring even the shadow of a summer cloud over those commandments which are his delight. Again he affirms: "the righteousness of Thy testimonies is eternal"; and he only needs himself to be sustained of God in ability to discern their blessedness, the bringing into that life which is alone true life: "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God shall men *live*."

Sec. 5. (*Koph.*)

The next section is more difficult to characterize; but as a fifth it seems to speak of exercise: not, in the first part at least, so much from the difficulties and trials of the way, as over the word of God itself, that healthful exercise which would that we all knew more of. In the second part the enmity of the wicked is spoken of, though briefly; and the soul comforts itself in Jehovah being near.

1. The psalmist calls with his whole heart upon Jehovah, earnestly professing his purpose of obedience. Where this is found, it naturally and necessarily leads to exercise over the Word: it is the foundation of it. The path is not so simple

(iii.) the word a refuge.
(iv.) testing.
(v.) the weak with the Strong.

I [z]anticipate the morning-dawn, and cry:
I wait in hope on thy word.
Mine eyes anticipate the [a]night-watches
in meditation on thy saying.
Hear my voice according to thy loving-kindness:
[b]quicken me, Jehovah, according to thy judgment.

2 (150–152): As to the wicked.
(i.) the rebellious.
(ii.) the Helper.
(iii.) realization.

They have drawn nigh that follow after [c]mischief:
they are far from thy law.
Thou art [d]nigh, Jehovah,
and all thy commandments are truth.
Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old,
that thou hast founded them for [e]ever.

[6] RESH.

Overcoming in judgment.

1 (153–155): The plea of integrity.
(i.) faithful to the law.
(ii.) plead and redeem.
(iii.) holiness.

Consider mine affliction, and [f]deliver me:
for I have not forgotten thy law.
[g]Plead my cause and redeem me:
quicken me according to thy saying.
Salvation is [h]far from the wicked:
for they seek not thy statutes.

z Ps. 130. 6. *cf.* Mk. 1. 35.
a *ctr.* Deut. 28. 67. *ctr.* Job 7. 4. Ps. 63. 1, 6.
b vers. 25, 37, 40, 88, etc.
c Ps. 26. 9, 10. *cf.* Ps. 10. 8–10.
d *cf.* Is. 50. 8.
e ver. 89.
f Ps. 34. 4, 17, 19. *cf.* Jer. 1. 8, 9.
g Ps. 35. 1. Lam. 3. 58. *cf.* Is. 51. 22, 23.
h Job 5. 4. *ctr.* Is. 54. 14.

that we can find it without God; nor is it meant to be; but then we find Him our companion in it. The suppliant needs salvation also: he does not say from what; indeed, from how many things, the hindrances which so constantly present themselves to obedience, but which are helps to faith as everything is that casts us upon God. The Word with all this gets a large place with him, just as surely as God gets His. He is up before the dawn, crying out to God, yet with hopeful expectancy which the Word had wrought in him. Nay, before the night-watches he is awake, meditating on God's sayings, testing his knowledge; finding continually indeed the drag of nature on him, for which he has to betake himself to Jehovah's loving-kindness for quickening energy, to discern what is of Him, according to His unfailing judgment.

2. He is not allowed to do this undisturbed. The wicked are near, and threatening mischief; enemies in heart and will to that which occupies him. But Jehovah too is near, the Rock upon which all these waves break in vain. The truth abides: nothing can alter that; and this His commandments are. Yea, His testimonies have of old been known as for ever fixed upon His own immutable foundations.

Sec. 6. (Resh.)

The sixth section has as its keynote the prayer of the second verse, "Plead my cause,"— in order to which the psalmist spreads it before God. The wicked cannot hope for deliverance; but he doubts not to stand in the judgment he invites, which, of course, is not at all as to any absolute righteousness, but only as to integrity of heart amid much weakness and many adversaries.

1. The affliction that he is in makes him seek for deliverance, and thus — because the wicked cannot hope for it — appeal for the taking up of his cause; yea, that Jehovah, who fully knows, would Himself plead it. He has not forgotten Jehovah's law, though he owns at the outset the need that he has of the impartation of living energy from Him, who has pledged Himself to him for such need. Utter weakness then on his part is recognized: he needs not to hide it: but he is not among the wicked who seek not the divine statutes.

2. He casts himself, therefore, afresh upon Jehovah's tender mercies for this living power, for a life according to the judgments of His truth and holiness. His adversaries are many, but they have not perverted him from the path of His testimonies, from the recognition of things according to His declaration

2 (156-160): Mid all that is against me.
(i.) quicken me.
(ii.) adversaries have not made me turn aside.
(iii.) the realization of their ways as before God.
(iv.) able to be tested but frail.
(v.) the ways of God.

1 (161-165): Its consistent supremacy.
(i.) its authority.
(ii.) moving the soul.
(iii.) the moral estimate of it.
(iv.) its estimate in experience.
(v.) governmental recompense.

2 (166-168): The seal of subjection.
(i.) obedience.

[i] Many, Jehovah, are thy tender mercies:
quicken me according to thy judgments.
Many are my [j] persecutors and mine adversaries:
I have not declined from thy testimonies.
I beheld the treacherous dealers and was [k] grieved:
because they keep not thy saying.
See how I [l] love thy precepts!
quicken me, Jehovah, according to thy loving-kindness.
The [m] sum of thy word is truth:
and every one of the judgments of thy righteousness [endureth] for ever.

[7] SCHIN.

Perfection of the Word.

Princes have persecuted me without cause:
but my heart standeth in [n] awe of thy word.
I rejoice in thy saying
as he that findeth great [o] spoil.
I [p] hate and abhor falsehood:
thy law do I love.
Seven times a day do I [q] praise thee,
because of the judgments of thy righteousness.
Great [r] peace have they who love thy law:
and nothing stumbleth them.

Jehovah, I have [s] hoped for thy salvation,
and performed thy commandments.

i cf. Ps. 40.5. Ps. 71. 15.
j Ps. 25. 19. cf. Ezek. 38. 4, 16, 23.
k ver. 136. cf. Ezek. 9. 4.
l ver. 97. cf. Ps. 40.8.
m cf. Rev. 22. 19. cf. Deut. 12. 32.
n ver. 23. cf. Lk. 12. 4, 5. cf. Is. 66. 2.
o cf. Lk. 24. 32. cf. Eph. 3. 8. cf. Matt. 13. 52.
p Ps. 31. 6. ver. 104. Prov. 13. 5.
q Ps. 55. 17. cf. 1 Thes. 5. 17, 18.
r Ps. 34. 14. Is. 26. 3. cf. Phil. 4. 6, 7.
s ver. 174. cf. Gen. 49. 18. cf. Lam. 3. 25, 26.

of them. Nay, he had beheld with grief the faithlessness of those who kept not these sayings. And he invites Jehovah Himself to behold how he loves His precepts, whatever the backwardness of nature for which, the third time, he beseeches that he may know His quickening power. But as to the ways of God, these his whole heart embraces. The whole of His word is truth, and every one of His righteous judgments—judgments which have their foundation in His own nature—abide as He Himself.

Sec. 7. (Schin.)

The seventh section naturally gives us now the perfection of that which has been the psalmist's theme all through, the word of God. The first and larger part views it in its peerless supremacy in whatever way it is contemplated. The second sets the seal to it of heartfelt subjection. The affirmation is of little value which lacks this element of true witness.

1. He has realized the opposition to God's word in the high places of the earth. Princes had persecuted him without cause beside, but his heart stands in awe of that in which God Himself has spoken to his conscience. His heart also has responded to it, so that it has become to him like the rich and varied booty of the soldier. But more, his moral estimate of it is similar: it is the holiness of truth that attracts him in it, as he hates the falsehood which it also hates. Constantly through the day does it lift up his heart in praise, because of the judgments which he realizes to be those of divine righteousness, and which he finds in the government of God illustrated and enforced. For "great peace have they who love thy law," and their path is free from the stumbling-blocks over which others fall.

2. This word has been wrought into his practical life. The salvation which it assures of he has waited for in hope; its commandments he has obeyed; loving exceedingly the testimonies that it gives; keeping its precepts as being man-

(ii.) in love.
(iii.) the ways before God.

My soul has kept thy testimonies:
and I [t]love them exceedingly.
I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies:
for all my [u]ways are before thee.

DIVISION. 4

TAU.

Jacob in his trouble.

1 (169-172): Israel's vow.
(i.) the gift of knowledge.
(ii.) deliverance.
(iii.) praise.

Let my cry come near before thee, Jehovah:
give me [v]discernment according to thy word.
Let my supplication come before thee:
according to thy saying [w]deliver me.
My lips shall pour forth [x]praise,
when thou hast taught me thy statutes.

(iv.) the voice to the nations (?)

My tongue shall speak [y]aloud of thy saying:
for all thy commandments are righteousness.

t vers. 97, 159. *cf.* Job 23. 12. *cf.* Col. 3. 16.
u Job 34. 21. *cf.* Jer. 32. 19. *cf.* Ps. 1. 6.
v vers. 34, 73, 144. *cf.* Eph. 1. 18. *cf.* Eph. 5. 17.
w ver. 153.
x vers. 7, 164. Ps. 63. 5, 6.
y cf. Ps. 102. 21, 22.

ifested in all things to Him before whom he walked. Unspeakable blessedness to walk thus in the Eternal Light of that glorious Presence before we enter the joy of the presence-chamber itself.

DIV. 4. (*Tau.*)

The twenty-one sections of the psalm fall then, plainly, into three equal and parallel series of seven sections each, which together would seem to complete the subject naturally, and leave room for nothing more. But in fact we find another section, which, of course, is necessary also for the completion of the alphabetic arrangement. What, then, is its place, in connection with what has gone before? Is it an eighth section of the third division? or is it by itself a fourth division of the psalms? There can be no doubt, when we have examined it, that it is a fourth division.

Its structure is clearly different from that of any of the former sections. Each of these we have found to divide into 3+5 or 5+3; or else, as in the seventh of both the first and second divisions, the first five verses are again divided into 2+3. Here, on the other hand, the eight verses can only divide as 4+4; the last part being evidently a fourfold prayer, or plea for salvation. The last verse of the whole in no wise suggests an eighth section. It is, as a whole, a descent from and not a continuation of the last one. The number 4 seems suited to and stamped on it throughout; even the acrostic letter here, the Tau, standing for 400 in the Hebrew notation. The drop in the character of what we find here is thus accounted for.

Looking more closely into it, it is evident that, as a fourfold plea for salvation it occupies the latter half: the former one is, in fact, a promise or vow to the Lord in the event of deliverance. And as this cannot be the King (as in the sixty-first psalm) whose vows are before us, we naturally think of Israel. Looked at in this way, the meaning of the whole comes clearly into view.

This final section is in reality an appendix to the psalm; in which we have indicated the reference of it to Israel in the tribulation of the latter days predicted as to them. This is, as we know, their spiritnal birthtime as a nation, when they come into the new covenant. There is no difficulty, therefore, in the application; and this section is practically, whatever else, an inspired note as to the "times and seasons" to which the psalm relates.

1. The first part is, as already intimated, Israel's vow in their distress,—a vow, not like that of the old covenant, made in self-righteousness at Sinai, the covenant so quickly broken, though the patience of God might long endure with them. Here all is based upon what God is looked to to work for them and in them, so that they may step into their predestined place, and be the witnesses of His grace and salvation to the ends of the earth. They promise no legal obedience, but only to

2 (173-176): The plea for salvation.
(i.) the choice of obedience.
(ii.) the desire for salvation.
(iii.) the praise resultant.
(iv.) a sheep astray.

Let thy hand [z]help me:
for I have chosen thy precepts.
I have [a]longed for thy salvation, Jehovah,
and thy law is my delight.
Let my soul [b]live, and it shall praise thee:
and let thy judgments help me.
I have gone [c]astray like a lost sheep:
seek thy servant;
for I have not [d]forgotten thy commandments.

[z] Is. 41. 10.
[a] ver. 166.
[b] *cf.* Is. 38. 18–20.
[c] Is. 53. 6. 1 Pet. 2. 25. *cf.* Ezek. 34. 11–16.
[d] vers. 16, 61, 83, 93, 109, 141, 153.

declare this; which prophecy has of old assured us that they will do. All this, therefore, is quite accordant with a new covenant blessing.

Their cry goes up to Jehovah for light to break out from His word for them: no true knowledge could there be but through the Word, by which they are quickened also that they may have it. They plead the promise also of deliverance; and when delivered and taught His statutes, their lips shall pour forth praise. So, indeed, they shall. The last verse here implies, I think, their testimony to the nations, and that is what its numerical place points out. Their tongue shall speak *aloud* of God's saying, and the world shall hear it.

2. The second part gives their plea for God's salvation. This is, first, that they have chosen Jehovah's precepts: a plea already allowed in Deut. xxx. 1–3. The second is their longing for His salvation. They are not ignorant of their need, and they seek no more to other saviours. The third is the praise that shall result: and God acts for the glory of His own great Name: being in this most gracious. That Jehovah would dwell among the praises of His people was a joy in the heart of the dying Saviour, and what that precious death was designed to accomplish (Ps. xxii. 3, *notes*). Lastly, they put before God the misery which wrought in the heart of the Good Shepherd, according to His own appealing picture (Luke xv.): gone astray like a lost sheep, they ask Him the Shepherd to seek them out, already touched by the grace which has wrought in them to put into their hearts that desire for His commandments in which they come back to their first plea in which the promise in Deuteronomy applies plainly to them.

Here their plea ends; and in the "songs of degrees" which directly follow, we shall find the divine answer to it.

Subd. 3.

We have now reached the so-called "songs and degrees," a clearly defined series of fifteen psalms, which, with two thanksgiving psalms appended, forms the third subdivision of the Fifth Book. These songs of degrees are rather "songs of the ascents," which we are surely right in interpreting in the first place by reference to those ascents of the tribes thrice a year to the feasts at Jerusalem, which are spoken of in the third psalm of this very series (cxxii. 4). But this only furnishes a clue to the inner meaning, this repeated call to the city of God being in view of those "set times" of Lev. xxiii. which speak of those gracious acts of God toward His people which for all eternity will call them round Himself in praise. The "ascents" are, therefore, above all else, ascents of the heart to Him because of His grace, and this is in fact what these songs are—a recounting in a fivefold series the Divine ways toward Israel, by which their blessing has been accomplished, and for which their hearts will endlessly praise Him. With this the "climbing" movement of the psalms themselves, which Delitzsch adduces, after Gesenius, is in intimate sympathy,—a feature which only shows how perfectly the form of these inspired songs is moulded by their spirit, while it by no means allows us to degrade them as their materialistic interpretation would, by making the form the whole thing.

SUBDIVISION 3. (Ps. cxx.–cxxxvi.)

The full blessing realized.

SECTION 1. (Ps. cxx.–cxxxiv.)

In God's sovereign grace.

SUBSECTION 1. (Ps. cxx.–cxxii.)

Faithful to promise.

Ps. cxx.

[1]PSALM CXX.

Solitary!

A song of the [e] ascents.

(i.) Jehovah's faithfulness. (ii.) the cry for deliverance from the deceiver.

IN my [f] strait to Jehovah I call,
and he answereth me.
Jehovah, deliver my soul from a [g] lying lip,—
from a deceitful tongue.

[e] Ps.121-134 titles. Ps. 122. 4. *cf.* Ezek.40. 6, 22, etc. *cf.* Jer. 50. 4, 5.

[f] Ps. 107. 6. Ps. 118. 5. *cf.* Joel 2. 12–17.

[g] Ps. 101. 7. Prov.12.19, 22.

Sec. 1.

These fifteen psalms are thus in fact five threes, a little pentateuch of song, answering to the larger pentateuch of the Psalms as a whole. Each three has its own distinct theme of praise, and each three is a distinct "ascent" also in its subject-matter,—in some sense, as the numerical signature might imply, a resurrection.

All through they are divine acts that are celebrated, and acts of sovereign grace, though man may be used, more or less, in their accomplishment. In the first three, as in the beginning of the 107th psalm, the trial of the wilderness is exchanged for the "city of habitation." In the second, the deliverance is from enemies that had well-nigh accomplished their destruction. The third is more general, but above all celebrates Jehovah as the One worker of all their blessing. The fourth shows the good work that all their trial has wrought in their souls. While the fifth shows finally God with them, and their Melchizedek, the King-Priest through whom it is accomplished for them, and man's heart turned to God finds a full answer in blessing out of Zion, the place of God's eternal rest among them.

Subsec. 1.

We come now to fuller detail. And here the first subsection introduces us, according to the usual manner of Scripture, to what is to be developed further in those to come. The heading here is therefore necessarily a general one. Israel's promises are seen to be made good to her, after the long sojourn in Meshech and among the enemies of peace. Even there Jehovah has been their Keeper; and soon the restored city opens its gates to receive them, crowned with the glorious dwelling-place of God Himself; while the tribes, resettled in the land, renew their ascents to gather round Him. This is the full picture of their blessing, one may say; with one feature, however, of central importance, only suggested and not entered upon, that which the closing series of the five develops. The fifth, returning to the first, makes the circle of blessing complete.

PSALM CXX.

No mere historical view of the origin of these psalms can unite them together in an intelligible manner. Nothing will do it except the realization that they give us various lines of connection between the history of Israel in their distress as nationally away from God, and that prophetic future which we find so clearly announced for them in the pages of the Old Testament. The partial return from Babylon cannot fill out the picture here,—can give nothing but a faint and transient anticipation of it. Here is where commentators go astray so largely as to the Psalms; trying to satisfy themselves with theories of their origin in the past, with which Scripture itself, it is plain, so little concerns itself, and which are mere, if not wild, conjectures; while, as given by men led of the Holy Ghost,

(iii.) the reality, what?

What will it [h]give to thee? and what will it add to thee?
the deceitful tongue? *

(iv.) the voice of experience.

Sharp [i]arrows of the mighty,
with [j]coals of broom.

(v.) exercise

Woe is me, that I [k]sojourn in Meshech:
that I dwell among the [l]tents of Kedar!

(vi.) the height of the evil.

My soul hath long dwelt
with him that [m]hateth peace.

(vii.) full opposition.

I [am for] [n]peace;
but when I speak, they are for war.

*Or, "will he give," "will he add . . . O deceitful tongue?"

h *cf.* Is. 28. 15, 17. *cfr.* 1 Tim. 6. 6.
i Ps. 57. 4. Ps. 64. 3. *cf.* Prov. 26. 18, 19.
j *cf.* Prov. 26. 21.
k *cf.* Ezek. 27. 13. *cf.* Ezek. 38. 2. *cf.* Ezek. 39. 1.
l *cf.* Ps. 42. 6, 10. *cf.* Ps. 84. 10. *cf.* Is. 21. 16, 17; *cf.* Is. 60. 7. m Ps. 35. 20; *cf.* Is. 59. 7, 8. n *cf.* Luke 2. 14 with Is. 9. 6; *cf.* Ps. 72. 7.

their meaning is to be sought in connection with those counsels of God as to Israel and the world, with regard to which all their voices come into harmony, and adjust and explain each other. In these "songs of the ascents" especially, the history is so generalized that it would be difficult, indeed, to fix its connections. Who can tell us about the "sojourning in Meshech," or the "dwelling in the tents of Kedar"? Accordingly Delitzsch, with many others, decides that "both these names of peoples are to be understood emblematically." And elsewhere we have really nothing to furnish a clue at all. Yet, read in connection, there is no real difficulty as to the purport of these psalms. Had not the often unanswerable "how?" come so largely to displace the all-important "why?" in the minds of the professed interpreters of Scripture, they would not have been in the confusion that they are to-day. The "how" may be largely human: the "why" is divine. And where God is, we shall find Him more accessible than man is, as He is how much more worthy of being sought to, and the knowledge thus obtained infinitely more gainful.

The 120th psalm is almost all distress. The main point of cheer in it is what comes first of all, that "in my strait to Jehovah I call, and He answereth me." This the psalmist realizes, although the great deliverance that he seeks for has not come. God does not always cash His notes at sight; but if not, He pays large interest on them. "The lying lip" and the "deceitful tongue" are the subject of his first complaint, whether this be some special deceiver, or more general. The third verse may be understood in two very different ways; and most would read it with the common version, as an address to the "tongue,"—the deceiver. In this case the question will be as to the judgment of God, and the fourth verse will announce the judgment. The numerical structure seems to decide for another interpretation, in which the question "what does this deceitful tongue give to thee?" is answered by experience. In this case, the transition is better seen also, to the war spirit of the close of the psalm: "Sharp arrows of the mighty" remind us of the similar "sharp razor" of the "mighty one" in the fifty-second psalm, who is addressed also as a "deceitful tongue." And "coals of broom" do not seem so suitable an image for divine judgment as for human fury breaking out. This naturally leads on to the psalmist's lament over his sojourn in Meshech and in the tents of Kedar, nomads, very likely to suggest the "sharp arrows" he has spoken of; and whose trade as Ishmaelites was depredation and war.

The names are, as already said, "emblematic": "My soul has long dwelt with him that hateth peace"; that is the moral of it. "I am peace,"—a man characterized by that; but to speak it only rouses the opposition: "when I speak, they are for war." This is what the world is: and this is what it showed itself to be when the Prince of peace came into it. Thus it was that He, over whom, as born into it, the angels proclaimed peace, in His own clear knowledge of the immediate result, proclaimed "not peace, but a sword." He could indeed say "I am peace,"—the very incarnation of it. What did His humanity mean but

Ps. cxxi.

[2]PSALM CXXI.

The Preserver.

A song of the ascents.

(i.) the source of help?

I [o]LIFT up mine eyes to the hills:
whence shall my help come?

(ii.) the Helper.

My help cometh from Jehovah,
who [p]made the heavens and the earth.

(iii.) the realization.

He will not suffer thy [q]foot to be moved;
thy Keeper will not slumber.

(iv.) frailty none.

Behold, neither [r]slumbereth nor sleepeth
the Keeper of Israel.

(v.) the weak with the Strong.

Jehovah is thy Keeper:
Jehovah is thy [s]shade upon thy right hand.

(vi.) limiting.

The [t]sun shall not smite thee by day,
nor the moon by night.

(vii.) perfect keeping.

Jehovah shall keep thee from [u]all evil:
he shall keep thy soul.

(viii.) for ever!

Jehovah shall keep thy [v]going out and thy coming in,
from [w]henceforth and for ever.

o *cf.* 1K1.8.47–49. *cf.* Dan. 6. 10.
cf. Ps. 5. 7.
p Ps. 124. 8.
q Ps. 37. 23, 24. Prov. 3.23, 26.
r Ps. 139.11, 12.
s Ps. 91. 1.
t Is. 49. 10.
u Ps.91.9,10.
v Deut.28.6. *cf.* Jno.10.9.
w Ps. 131. 3. *cf.* Ps. 72.7.

"peace: good pleasure in man"? Yet His rejection was written upon the cross in every typical human language.

Israel were not then, and have not since been, the "sons of peace," such as the Lord sent His disciples out to seek. And we must look on to the latter days to find them as depicted here. The remnant, then, will indeed be "like sheep in the midst of wolves"; the essential opposition between Christ's people and the world will have sharpened into its acutest form, and it is simple enough that this first psalm here should give it expression.

Psalm CXXI.

But the next psalm shows itself to be indeed "a song of ascents." Although not the full blessing, which the psalm following is to bring, yet the soul has found its help and its Preserver,—found it where alone help is, in the living God.

The first part of the first verse is not, as some would make it, a question. For an Israelite the presence of God naturally connects itself with Zion, the place of His rest, but where as yet He is not found. The psalmist looks there, but as yet only questioningly. But not questionable, nevertheless, is the source of his help: it is found in Him whose is not merely Zion, but heaven and earth. His refuge is in His unslumbering care, keeping the feet of him who is still a pilgrim. He is *Israel's* Keeper: so faith, even from afar off, claims Him;—Jehovah, the faithful covenant-keeping God. The Pillar of Cloud by day again appears in the shade upon the right hand which forbids the scorching sun of the desert to smite the people of God, or the moon by night: (for the moon can affect both eyes and brain). But this is only an illustration of wider and perfect protection: "Jehovah shall keep thee from *all* evil: He shall keep thy soul."

The last verse answers, in its number attached, to what is expressed definitely in it: "Jehovah shall keep thy going out and coming in, from henceforth even for ever." Eternity shall have its blessed activities, realized in as blessed dependence on the unfailing God.

Psalm CXXII.

The next psalm brings in the full blessing. In view of the 132nd psalm, it is quite natural that it should be a psalm of David: against which it is vain to appeal to the fifth verse, unless it is quite plain that not only was David no prophet, but that he did not even *believe* the prophecy as to his house.

Ps. cxxii.
1 (1-4): The centre of unity.
(i.) the basis of unity.
(ii.) the testimony of sight.
(iii.) a solid reality—the reunited city.
(iv.) the nation united with it—the tribal pilgrimages.
2 (5-9): Subjection in love claimed and yielded.
(i.) her supremacy.
(ii.) the prayer of attachment sought.
(iii.) and found.
(iv.) the human ground.
(v.) the divine-human ground.

[3] PSALM CXXII.

The restored House and the City!

A song of the ascents: of David.

I WAS [x] glad when they said unto me,
Let us go into the house of Jehovah.
Standing are our feet
within thy [y] gates, Jerusalem.
Jerusalem, that art built up
as a city that is [z] compacted together;
Whither the [a] tribes go up, the tribes of Jah,
a testimony for Israel,
to give thanks to Jehovah's Name.

For there are set [b] thrones for judgment,
thrones for the house of David.
Pray for the [c] peace of Jerusalem!
they shall prosper that love thee.
Peace be within thy walls,
and [d] prosperity within thy palaces.
For my [e] brethren and companions' sake,
I will say, May peace be within thee.
For the sake of the [f] house of Jehovah our God
I will seek thy good.

x *ctr.* Lam. 1. 4.
y Ps. 87. 2. Is. 60. 18.
z Ps. 48. 2, 12, 13.
a Deut. 16. 16. Ps. 84. 7.
b *cf.* 2 Chr. 19. 8. *cf.* Is. 28. 5, 6. *cf.* Matt. 19. 28.
c Ps. 51. 18. Ps. 137. 5, 6. *cf.* Jer. 31. 23.
d *cf.* Is. 2. 2. *cf.* Is. 60. 5, 11, 16.
e Ps. 133. 1.
f Ps. 132. 5. *ctr.* Jer. 29. 7.

The psalm shows us the end of the pilgrimage in the restored city and temple of the glorious days to come. The worse than lone man of the first psalm finds himself here surrounded with companions, who are in complete sympathy also with his own delight in what is the glorious city's crown of blessing, the dwelling-place of Jehovah in her midst.

1. Jerusalem is now the uniting centre for Israel: in fact, (though this does not appear in the psalm,) of the whole earth. The basis of unity the first verse expresses, the power over the soul of Jehovah's house. *Our* Jerusalem has indeed no temple, but only because God is there in a more perfect way. But how glad will they be when it is said to them, "Let us go into the house of Jehovah"! It is now for them no more a matter of faith: it is one of sight: "standing are our feet within thy gates, Jerusalem."

It is a resurrection, indeed, this city compacted together: all firmly united because held by that divine attraction which the first verse expresses. No other bond can unite like this, and none else be like this—eternal.

Now we see the nation united with it, the tribes going up on their pilgrimages when in the land,—happy substitution for the toil of the wilderness itself, now ended. Thus the blessing is now complete for them: I do not, of course, mean told out completely, but we realize that they are in it.

2. The city thus reviewed is now lifted into the supremacy which belongs to it: "for there are set thrones of judgment,—thrones for the house of David." Christ has His place here, as we know, though we must go to other scriptures to learn that it is so. "Thrones," in the plural, and "for the *house* of David," imply, apparently, the vice-royalty of the simply human "prince" of that line, with whom Ezekiel makes us acquainted (ch. xlvi. throughout). Of the reign of the heavenly saints with Christ, with which some would connect it, it cannot possibly speak.

The thrones are "for judgment,"—no mere regal state: for righteousness is to be maintained upon the earth; and men are bidden now to welcome and be subject to this new sovereignty. As was said to Abraham, "blessed shall he be who blesseth thee," so now is it here: "they shall prosper that love thee." To

SUBSECTION 2. (Ps. CXXIII.–CXXV.)
Deliverance from enemies.

Ps. CXXIII.

[1]PSALM CXXIII.

God only sufficient.

A song of the ascents.

(i.) the eyes up to the throne.
UNTO thee do I [g]lift up mine eyes,
thou that dwellest in the heavens!
(ii.) as the eyes of servants.
Behold, as the eyes of servants unto the hand of their [h]masters,—
as the eyes of a maiden to the hand of her mistress,
so our eyes are toward Jehovah our God,
until he show us grace.
(iii.) the sanctuary refuge.
Be gracious to us, Jehovah, be gracious to us:
for our soul is filled full of [i]contempt;—
(iv.) the trial.
Our soul is filled full with the scorn of the [j]careless,—
the contempt of the haughty.

g Ps. 121. 1.
h *cf.* 2 Chr. 20. 12.
i *cf.* Neh. 4. 4.
j *cf.* Amos 6. 1. *cf.* Zech. 1. 15.

Ps. CXXIV.

[2]PSALM CXXIV.

The deliverance.

1 (1-5): Jehovah alone the cause.
A song of the ascents: of David.
(i.) He alone for,
(ii.) men against.
(iii.) the fullness of their wrath.
[k]HAD not Jehovah been for us,
now may Israel say:
Had not Jehovah been for us,
when men rose up against us:
They had [l]swallowed us alive,
when their anger was kindled against us;

k Ps. 54. 4.
l Ps. 56. 1, 2.

love righteousness is to be righteous; and here is a kingdom of righteousness in which every sufferer for and every hater of wrong may rejoice together. The peace of Jerusalem means the welfare of men and the blessing of God. There is a human ground for such a prayer as is here offered: brethren and companions in divine things whose prosperity it means; and there is a *divine-human* ground, that dwelling of God with man which the house of God implies. Oh for the days to come in which all this shall be revealed! And yet this is only the type and shadow of better things above.

Thus the first series is clearly ended, and to begin another we go back in time.

Subsec. 2.

The next series shows us Israel's deliverance from her enemies; and it is so transparently plain as to need little comment.

PSALM CXXIII.

The first psalm here, as in the former one, is only the distress, which yet has not gone as far as it will go. Jehovah is the one resource; and as dwelling in the heavens, not in Zion. But these eyes that turn to heaven are servants' eyes: the spirit of obedience is in their hearts; and along with this the conscious need of grace. The pride of man is here the trial, as before his deceitfulness and spirit of strife. But the latter blazes out again in the next psalm.

PSALM CXXIV.

The deliverance is here already come, and it is an escape out of the extremest peril. They are conscious that only Jehovah could have accomplished it: else they would have been overwhelmed, as they nearly had been. Deceit had been at work too, as wherever our enemy is concerned it will be: there was a snare, which is now broken. Jehovah's Name — all that He is — is, however, engaged

(iv.) overwhelmed us.
(v.) exercise.

Then the [m] waters had overwhelmed us,—
the torrent gone over our soul:
Then had gone over our soul
the [n] proud waters!

2 (6-8): The deliverance.
(i.) Jehovah's will.
(ii.) the snare broken.

Blessed be Jehovah,
who [o] gave us not over, a prey to their teeth!
Our soul is [p] escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowlers:
the snare is broken, and we are escaped.

(iii.) the Name our Sanctuary.

Our help is in the name of Jehovah,
the [q] maker of heaven and earth.

[m] Ps. 42. 7.
[n] Ps. 123. 4.
[o] *cf.* Ps. 107. 6.
[p] *cf.* Ps. 91. 3.
[q] Ps. 134. 3. *cf.* 1 Pet. 4. 19.

[3] PSALM CXXV.

Compassed round.

A song of the ascents.

Ps. cxxv.

1 (1-3): A faithful God.
(i.) immovable.
(ii.) the Defender.

THEY that trust in Jehovah are as mount Zion:
it cannot be [r] moved;
it abideth for ever.
Jerusalem,—the mountains surround her;
and Jehovah is [s] round about his people,
from henceforth even for ever.

(iii.) the holiness of it.

For the [t] rod of wickedness shall not rest on the lot of the righteous:
lest the righteous put forth their hands to iniquity.

[r] *cf.* Ps. 46. 1-3. Ps. 87. 1. *cf.* Mi. 4. 1.
[s] Ps. 5. 12. Ps. 32. 7. Ps. 34. 7. *cf.* Zech. 2. 5.
[t] *cf.* Is. 14. 5. *ctr.* Ps. 45. 6.

2 (4, 5): Diverse dealings with diverse conditions.
(i.) to the upright.
(ii.) with those who turn aside.

Do good unto the good, Jehovah:
even to those [u] upright in heart.
But as for those who [v] turn aside into their crooked ways,
Jehovah will lead them forth with the workers of vanity,—
[for] [w] peace upon Israel.

[u] Ps. 73. 1. Ps. 140. 13. Prov. 2. 21.
[v] *cf.* Ex. 32. 8. *cf.* Is. 30. 9-16.
[w] *cf.* ver. 3. *cf.* Ps. 46. 8, 9. *cf.* Is. 32. 16-18.

for them, as it is for all His people. He has pledged it to us. How peaceful, then, at all times, should our confidence be!

Psalm CXXV.

The third psalm goes beyond this to the fully realized result. Mount Zion is again in view, but only as a symbol of the immovable security of all that trust in Jehovah. The mountains stand around her; and so Jehovah Himself is for ever round about His people. And this in holiness: He would not allow the rod of wickedness to rest on the lot of the righteous, lest their feebleness give way before this prosperous iniquity, to follow the path of its success.

Nay, let Jehovah do good unto the good,—not faultless, but through grace upright in the heart. For the rest, the perverters of their ways, He will surely give them their place among the workers of vanity,—all their subtlety shown only to be that,—and this for Israel's peace as delivered from them.

Subsec. 3.

The third series, while it speaks uniformly of blessing, and exalts Jehovah as the gracious Source of all, shows no less how far below the New Testament standpoint we are here, necessarily. The blessing is earthly, not heavenly; nay, in things purely "natural," as we say; that is, pertaining to the sphere of the first creation. It does not reach to the eternal state, even of the earth; and the Old Testament as a whole has but the promise of the "new earth," no open manifestation of its blessedness. The psalms are, here again, all of remarkably simple character.

SUBSECTION 3. (Ps. cxxvi.-cxxviii.)

Jehovah displaying Himself for His people.

Ps. cxxvi.

[1]PSALM CXXVI.

The grace and faithfulness of His ways.

A song of the ascents.

(i.) singular grace.

WHEN Jehovah [x]turned the captivity of Zion,
we were like those that dream.

(ii.) the testimony of the nations.

Then was our mouth filled with [y]laughter,
and our tongue with shouting:
then said they among the [z]nations,
Jehovah hath done great things for them.

(iii.) realized.

Jehovah hath done [a]great things for us:
[so that] we are glad.

(iv.) let our experience be as this experience.

Turn again our captivity, Jehovah,
as [b]streams in the South.*

(v.) governmental ways.

They that [c]sow in tears
shall reap with singing.

(vi.) the triumph.

Though one goeth to and fro even weeping,
bearing the measure of seed,
he shall surely come back with [d]singing for joy,
[e]bearing his sheaves.

Ps. cxxvii.

[2]PSALM CXXVII.

The necessary dependence of all upon Jehovah.

A song of the ascents: of Solomon.

(i.) Jehovah only sufficient.

[f]EXCEPT Jehovah build the house,
its builders toil on it in vain:
except Jehovah [g]keep the city,
in vain the keeper is awake.

x Is. 35. 10. *cf.* Jer. 50. 4-7. *cf.* Ps. 85.1.
y *cf.* Job 8.21. *cf.* Is. 65.19.
z Ps. 98. 2, 3. Is. 52. 10.
a *cf.* 1 Sam. 12. 24. *cf.* Num. 23. 23.
b *cf.* Is. 35. 7, 8. *cf.* Is. 44. 3, 4. *cf.* Josh. 15. 19.
c Jer. 31.8,9. Is. 54.11,12
d Is. 54. 1. Zeph. 3. 14.
e *cf.* Is. 49.20, 21.
f *cf.* Is. 30.15.
g Ps. 121.3-5. Is. 27. 3.

* *Negeb.*

PSALM. CXXVI.

Zion's captivity is turned, and God's wonderful grace to Israel seems yet almost too great to be believed. Yet it is real; and all the world is speaking of it. The nations have learned to speak of Jehovah, and of the great things He has done; and their hearts echo this with gladness: Jehovah has done great things indeed.

The fourth verse prays for the full accomplishment—probably the entire return now of their scattered tribes, so that the land may receive again the streams of her population, as the dry channels of the south receive in due time the fresh and abundant water. Those dry beds speak of Israel in her time of drought, when her only rain was the tears with which she bedewed the earth; and God has to appoint to His people, because of what they are, such seasons of disciplinary sorrow. Yet not of themselves will these be fruitful. Fruit can only come from the seed which, thrown into the furrows, has in it the new life which is to reward the sower's toil. And Israel will have had these patient sowers, the "wise," of Daniel's prophecy, who shall "turn many to righteousness," and whose sheaves shall be brought in with harvest-songs.

So will the grace of God's ways be manifest, as well as His faithful dealing with His own. In this sense also does it reign through righteousness.

PSALM CXXVII.

Thus all comes from Jehovah, and He is seen to be the sole dependence of all His creatures. It is from this that man departed in Eden, to set up in independ-

(ii.) the contrast between man's effort and Jehovah's gift.

(iii.) a portion from Jehovah.

(iv.) for the time of trial.

(v.) and juridical assault(?)

Vain is it for you to [h]rise up early,
to be down late,
to eat the bread of [i]drudgery:
so giveth he to his beloved—in [j]sleep.
Lo, [k]children are an inheritance from Jehovah;
the fruit of the womb a reward.
As [l]arrows in the hand of a mighty man,
so are children of youth.
Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them:
they shall not be [m]ashamed when they speak with enemies in the gate.

[h] *cf.* Is. 7. 4. *cf.* Is. 30. 7.
[i] *cf.* Lk. 10. 40–42.
[j] Ps. 131. 2. *cf.* Mark 4. 26, 27.
[k] *cf.* Gen. 15. 2–5.
cf. Is. 56. 3–5.
[l] *cf.* Gen. 14. 14, 15.
[m] *cf.* Gen. 30. 23.

Ps. cxxviii.

[3]PSALM CXXVIII.

The portion of the man that fears Jehovah.

A song of the ascents.

(i.) the obedient man.

(ii.) his increase yielding him support.

(iii.) his house.

HAPPY is every one that [n]feareth Jehovah:
that walketh in his ways.
For thou shalt eat the [o]labor of thy hands:
happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.
Thy wife shall be as a [p]fruitful vine
in the inner part of thy house:
thy children like [q]olive-plants
round about thy table.

[n] Ps. 112. 1, 2.
[o] Is. 3. 10. Is. 65. 22.
[p] *cf.* Ezek. 19. 10.
[q] Ps. 144. 12.

(iv.) an appeal to experience.

Behold, for [r]thus shall the man be blessed
that feareth Jehovah.

[r] *ctr.* Ps. 52. 7.

(v.) Israel with God.

Jehovah shall bless thee [s]out of Zion:
and thou shalt see the [t]good of Jerusalem, all the days of thy life.

[s] Ps. 134. 3. Ps. 135. 21.
[t] Ps. 122. 6.

(vi.) the threshold of full blessing (?)

Yea, thou shalt see thy [u]children's children,
[and] peace upon Israel.

[u] Gen. 50. 23. Prov. 17. 6.

ence for himself. If he is brought back, then, it must be to this; and this is what we find in the hundred and twenty-seventh psalm. Jehovah alone is sufficient: except He build the house, the builders toil on it in vain; except He keep the city, the keeper vainly is awake. And then follows the emphatic rebuke of that anxious toil on man's part, early and late, eating the bread of drudgery, while God gives to those beloved of Him in a way so different: they lie down and sleep, and are supplied!

So with the blessing of children: they are an inheritance from Jehovah, and a reward; a portion like Abraham's, a defence in the day of trial, and of false accusation.* This last part of the psalm leads on to the one following.

Psalm CXXVIII.

We have here the portion of him who fears Jehovah, but with only a hint of higher blessings than the natural. One might think it patriarchal life restored, but for Jerusalem and Zion. The six verses here give us, I think, an intimation that after all, this is not the full blessing. It scarcely needs comment.

It is the happiness of the obedient man. He subsists on his own labor—does not yield it to another. Wife and children are the adornments of his house; and now there is no thought of enemies in the gate. The fourth verse appeals to experience for the proof of the blessing; there being no more the mysteries that perplex us now.

In the fifth, the blessing is from Jehovah out of Zion, and Jerusalem is in

* The gate of the city was the place of judgment.

SUBSECTION 4. (Ps. cxxix.-cxxxi.)
The lessons of experience.

Ps. cxxix.

[1]PSALM CXXIX.

An over-ruling Hand.

A song of the ascents.

1 (1-3): By the will of the lawless.
(i.) from the beginning;
(ii.) but who has not prevailed;
(iii.) what they did accomplish.

MANY a time have they [v]afflicted me from my youth,—
let Israel now say:
Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth,
yet they have [w]not prevailed against me.
The plowers [x]plowed upon my back:
they made long their furrows.

2 (4-8): His deliverance by their destruction.
(i.) in righteousness.
(ii.) enemies turned back.
(iii.) the ban;
(iv.) failing.
(v.) cut off from Jehovah.

Jehovah is righteous:
he [y]cutteth asunder the cords of the wicked.
Let them be [z]ashamed and turned back,
all the haters of Zion.
Let them be as grass upon the house-tops,
that [a]withereth before it be plucked up;
Wherewith the mower [b]filleth not his hand,
nor the binder his bosom.
Nor do they that pass by say,
the [c]blessing of Jehovah be upon you:
we have blessed you in Jehovah's name.

v *cf.* Is. 54.6, 11.
w Mi. 7. 8.
x Ps. 66. 12. Is. 51. 23.
y *cf.* Ps. 116. 16. *ctr.* Ps. 2.3.
z Ps. 70. 2. *cf.* Ps.48.4-6.
a Ps. 37. 2. Is. 37. 27.
b *ctr.* Ps.126. 6. *cf.* Ps. 1. 4.
c *cf.* Ruth 2. 4.

continual prosperity. Such are the days to which we have here reached: a state of things which the sixth verse only emphasizes in children's children seen following one another in progressive generations, and still with "peace upon Israel."

Subsec. 4.

The fourth subsection drops apparently below this; only, in fact, to secure a deeper blessing. We go back once more from the summer days which the last series pictured. to learn from sorrow and adversity the lessons of those various changes by which men learn the fear of God (Ps. lv. 19).

And for this self must be known, pride humbled, the world seen in divine light, and the soul weaned from all that makes it up. That is what is found in the present series. Psalm cxxix. first shows us the overruling hand of God in sorrow and evil. Then the hundred and thirtieth shows us sin discovered, and its remedy by one that cries out of the depths; then the hundred and thirty-first gives the moral result in a weaned soul.

PSALM CXXIX.

The first psalm here carries us behind the outward disorder of things, to show us God accomplishing His will through all. He may be acting with the enemies of His people, but He is not Himself an enemy. Israel may look back through the time of her long afflictions, and see how men have inflicted these on her; yet they have never really prevailed. They have not done what they intended; and they have done what they never intended. They have been as plowers plowing on the back,—painful and humiliating work enough; but it means none the less sowing and harvest; and the plow is set aside even before this. He who uses it for good, sets it aside too, to have the good.

So the psalmist prophesies and prays for the destruction of the wicked at the hands of the righteous God. He sees their cords cut asunder, and prays that they may be turned back in shame who hate Zion, and hate thus the purposes of grace with which it is identified. As grass upon the house-tops, withering be-

Ps. cxxx.

[2]PSALM CXXX.

Redemption from sin.

A song of the ascents.

(i.) the sole hope.

OUT of the [d]depths have I called
unto thee, Jehovah.

(ii.) the prayer for help.

Lord, [e]hear my voice!
let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.

(iii.) the Holy One.

If thou, Jah, shouldest [f]mark perversities,
Lord, who shall stand?

(iv.) but merciful.

But with thee there is [g]forgiveness,
that thou mayest be [h]feared.

(v.) waiting on Him.

I [i]wait on Jehovah,—my soul doth wait:
and in his word do I hope.

(vi.) till the limited time.

My soul [waiteth] for the Lord,
more than the [j]watchers for the morning,—
[more than] watchers for the morning.

(vii.) perfect provision.

Let Israel [k]wait in hope for Jehovah,
for with Jehovah is [l]loving-kindness,
and with him is [m]plenteous redemption;

(viii.) the new covenant.

And he will redeem Israel
[n]from all his perversities.

d cf. Ps. 69. 1, 2. *cf.* Is. 38.9-20. Lam. 3. 55. Ps.130. 1; 107. 28.
e Ps. 39. 11, 12.
f Ps. 143. 2. Mal. 3. 2. *cf.* Ex. 34. 6, 7. *cf.* Nu. 23. 21.
g Rom. 4. 6-8. Ps. 103. 3.
h cf. 1 Pet. 1. 17, 18. *cf.* Phil. 2. 12, 13 with 1 Jno. 4. 18.
i Ps. 25. 5. Lam. 3. 25, 26.
j ctr. Is. 21. 11, 12. *cf.* Mal. 4. 2. *cf.* Rev. 22. 16, 17.
k Ps. 131. 3.
l Ps. 145. 9.
m Ps. 86. 5, 15. Ps. 103. 8. *cf.* Is. 40. 2.
n Ps. 25. 22; *cf.* Is. 33. 24; *cf.* Titus 2. 14.

fore men think enough of it to pluck it up; which never has a handful for the mower, nor a bosomful for the binder,—so let them be under the ban of God apart from Jehovah's blessing. So indeed *must* the evil, as evil, find its doom from God.

Psalm CXXX.

We go on to see what the plowing has effected. We had it in fact in the series of remnant-psalms in the first book of psalms (iii.–vii). The troubles of the remnant in the latter days, though at the hand of godless enemies, are used to bring them to realize the sins, which cast them entirely on the mercy of God alone. This is expressed here very similarly, and in words that show more than there that it is the effect of the disciplinary process. The humbled soul has learned to *wait* on Jehovah, the impatience of self-will set aside, patience having its perfect work; and this leads on to the closing psalm, where the full result in this way is seen.

"Out of the depths"—the extreme of distress, hopeless save to God—the soul cries to Him, the sole possible Helper. It seeks answer to its lowly complaint. It realizes in Him a holiness which, if He should act simply in view of it, no one could stand. But with Him there is forgiveness also; and the mercy that He shows is the very thing that produces in the recipients of it that reverent fear in which lies the beginning of all true wisdom. This makes Him to the soul its one expectancy: it waits in hope on Him. His word sustains and directs this hope, waiting for the Lord more than the anxious watchers for the morning light.

So may Israel wait in hope then. The bounty of His love will justify it. For with Him is plenteous redemption; and He will redeem Israel from all his perversities. The new covenant number fitly closes here the lowly and chastened strain of the psalm.

Psalm CXXXI.

The full moral result is shown in the final one: blessed result it is. All the pride of the heart has been broken down before God. The eyes no more range

Ps. cxxxi.

[3]PSALM CXXXI.

The moral result.

A song of the ascents: of David.

(i.) as to pride.

JEHOVAH, my heart is [o]not haughty;
nor are mine [p]eyes lofty:
nor do I engage in [q]great matters,
nor in things too [r]wonderful for me.

(ii.) weaned.

Surely I have [s]composed and quieted my soul,
like a weaned child with its mother:
my soul is beside me like a [t]weaned child.

(iii.) the refuge.

Let Israel hope in Jehovah:
from henceforth, [u]even for ever.

o *cf.* Zeph.3. 11. *cf.* Hos.7.10.
p Ps. 101. 5. Prov.30.13.
q *cf.* Jer.45.5
r *cf.* Ps.139.6.
s *cf.* Is.30.15. Lam. 3. 26.
t *cf.* Matt. 18. 3. *cf.* Rom.16 19. Ps. 116. 7.
u *cf.* Ps.125. 2.

SUBSECTION 5. (Ps. 132-134.)

Immanu-el.

Ps. cxxxii.

[1]PSALM CXXXII.

Zion and the King.

A song of the ascents.

1 (1-5): The foundation of the covenant.
(i.) a plea for faithfulness.
(ii.) the vow of service.
(iii.) full setting apart.

JEHOVAH, remember for David
all his [v]trouble:
Who [w]sware unto Jehovah,
and vowed unto the Mighty One of Jacob:—
I will not go into the pavilion of [x]my house,
I will not go up to the canopy of my bed;

v *cf.* 1 Sam. 26. 18-20.
w *cf.* 1 Chr. 13. 1-3.
x *cf.* 2 Sam. 7. 2.

through the heavens. There are no more ambitious attempts to reason about things too wonderful. He is master of himself, while conscious of the impulses within, which he stills and quiets. Spite of this nature of his which still needs government, he is like a weaned child in the presence of its mother, seeking no more his satisfaction in that in which he formerly sought it. Yea, his soul, the seat of these desires, is beside him its master—mastered himself by the glory of another Presence—like this weaned child.

When this condition is indeed attained, what hope in God then comes to animate the heart of the saint! Israel, thus in true peace with God may hope now in Jehovah, the faithful covenant-God, from henceforth, even for ever.

Subsec. 5.

The last triad of these songs of ascent is indeed a fitting close to them. As a fifth series, God and man are found together in it now in full reality; and through the historical veil there shines yet plainly the figure of Immanuel Himself. David and Aaron, the king and the priest, are fully recognized types of Christ in these official characters; while together they spell for us the Name of our Melchizedek, whose *work* appears in the final psalm. Here the "ascents" end in a glorious and eternal resting-place, beyond which there can be none,—no higher point reached. Of course, as to the blessing implied, Israel's is upon an earthly platform, as ours upon a heavenly. This we scarcely need continually to be reminded of: and the application to ourselves is scarcely the more difficult on account of this.

PSALM CXXXII.

Zion and the king, and the relation between these two are the subject of the first psalm of this closing series. Zion is here the seat of two Kingdoms, a heavenly and an earthly one, which now come into an absolute agreement never again to be disturbed. The books of the Kings give us the long history of past discord. The present psalm inaugurates the new peace brought in by the Prince of peace; and founded upon the work by which He has made peace.

(iv.) without allowing nature's weakness.
(v.) that God may be with man.
2 (6, 7): The past estrangement.
(i.) the ark solitary.
(ii.) love's desire.

I will not give [y] sleep to mine eyes
[nor] slumber to mine eye-lids,—
Until I find a [z] place for Jehovah,
tabernacles for the Mighty One of [a] Jacob.

Lo, we heard of it at [b] Ephratah,
we have found it in the fields of the wood.*
Let us [c] go into his tabernacles;
let us worship at his footstool.

* Or "Jaar."

[y] *cf.* Prov. 6. 4.
[z] *cf.* 1 Chr. 15. 1-28.
[a] *cf.* Is. 44. 1, 2.
[b] 2 Sam. 6. 2.
[c] Ps. 100. 4.

The work itself is not here, but the King is, and His zeal for Jehovah's house—His dwelling-place among men,—which has found the means of accomplishment, at His own cost, of eternal purposes. It will be best to let the psalm speak for itself with regard to such things, as it does in its own perfect way.

It is not directly said to be a psalm of David; but this seems to be most naturally indicated; and the tenth verse, which is generally considered to be against this, is in fact the most decisive argument in its favor, and that just because, interpreted, as is commonly done, "it creates," as Moll says, "the impression, not of a Messianic, but of an historical reference, and of having been spoken by a theocratic king. . . . The suppliant styles himself the anointed of Jehovah, yet prays for an answer 'for the sake of David thy servant.'" Typically, we shall indeed be troubled to know how to account for this king who prays for the sake of David, except David and the king are one! And then David is the petitioner also. That he speaks of himself in the third person is no difficulty, but quite according to his utterances elsewhere (2 Sam. vii. 20, 26).

1. The first section gives us the foundation of God's covenant with Him, his own intense longing for Jehovah's dwelling-place among men, which was, however, only the mere faint reflection of what it points to in the true "Beloved." All *His* trouble sprang but out of this; the zeal of God's house was that which consumed the Blessed Sufferer Himself. This, therefore, is a plea which the Eternal cannot possibly forget.

The vow of service follows to the "Mighty One of Jacob," easily realized by us as the God of omnipotent grace. To the purposes of divine grace, in which He is glorified, and in fulfillment of which it is that His dwelling-place is found among men, the "Man Christ Jesus" absolutely devoted Himself. Here was the One who would take no rest, whom no natural weakness would divert from His one object—"a place for Jehovah: tabernacles"—the twofold sanctuary, for us by the rending of the veil made one—"for the Mighty One of Jacob."

This is indeed what Immanuel—that Name of His which is grounded in the mystery of His wondrous Person—keeps ever before us. "God with man" is what is the innermost thought of the Mediator, what mediation means. The form in which it is here expressed is, of course, Jewish; but it embodies an infinite blessing, which it takes the full Christian gospel and the Book of Revelation together to bring out as we know it now. Eternity alone will give to us its priceless value.

2. Israel's estrangement from God is now brought before us: a fact of history with a prophetic significance. The ark was the essential feature of the tabernacle. It was the ark of the *covenant*,—the throne of Jehovah in Israel, upon the mercy-seat of which, once every year, the blood of atonement was sprinkled, in order that the sanctuary might be able to abide in the midst of Israel. When the ark, therefore, went into captivity in the Philistines' land, "Ichabod" was written upon the people. The link between God and the people had ceased to be by the priesthood. God indeed maintained one by the prophet He had raised up for the emergency; but this did not restore the priesthood, nor therefore the ark: it was a sign, rather, of its being in abeyance. And thus, though it speedily returned from among the Philistines, it did not return to its former place in Israel;

3 (8-10): Let Him return to His house. (i.) the place of His throne. (ii.) with its priestly ministry. (iii.) Thine Anointed! remember David.
4 (11, 12): Conditions. (i.) unchangeable promise as to the throne.

[d] Arise, Jehovah, into thy resting-place,
thou, and the ark of thy strength.
Let thy priests be [e] clothed with righteousness,
and let thy pious ones [f] shout for joy.
For thy servant [g] David's sake!
turn not away the face of thine [h] anointed.

Jehovah hath [i] sworn unto David in truth;
he will not turn from it:
Of the [j] fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne;

d Nu. 10. 35. Ps. 68. 1.
e ver. 16. 2 Chr. 6.41. f cf. Is.61.10. cf. Ezr.3.11, 12.
g ver. 1. cf. 1 Ki.11. 12.
h cf. Ps.84.9.
i Ps. 89. 3.
j 2 Sam. 7. 11, 12. cf. Matt.22. 41–45.

and David himself speaks of it as not sought unto, all the days of Saul (1 Chr. xiii. 3). The words of the psalm here show how far it had dropped out of Israel's thoughts. "We *heard of it* at Ephratah;* we found it"— where? "in the fields of the wood." The last word is "Jaar," and there is no need for doubt that it refers to Kirjath Jearim, the "city of the woods." But this style of speech clearly emphasizes it as a place of obscurity and retirement. The city has disappeared, as it were, from view, and only the "woods" are left.

But now the call to return is heard: "let us go unto His tabernacles; let us worship at His footstool." The abrupt, impulsive character of the address is quite in keeping. The heart is now awake, and realizing its ungrateful neglect of Him who is thus in grace come down to man.

3. Now the house is got ready for its divine Inhabitant. He is besought to come in, and after all changes to find here his rest: "Arise, Jehovah, into Thy resting-place, Thou and the ark of Thy strength." Here is His throne, and the priestly service must be connected with it, if it is to be a throne of grace. The priesthood of the past failed through the iniquity which characterized it: now may Jehovah provide Himself priests that shall be clothed with righteousness; and let pious ones, instead of wailing "Ichabod," shout for joy. The plea with which the psalm began is again urged: "For thy servant David's sake, turn not away the face of Thine Anointed."

The plea is, I think, here a double one, and complete in its two members. Christ in His Person and work are represented in "David" and Jehovah's "Anointed." But instead of the actual work being named, it is rather His own appointment to it and the testimony given of His delight in that appointment, that Jehovah is besought to remember. *He* had made no mistake. It was the Christ, *His* Christ, who invited Him to enter into the house made ready for Him, in the fulfillment of His own purposes of unfailing grace.

4. Jehovah's answer commences in the fourth section; but here we are called to distinguish, as connected with the typical character of the announcement, that which was but the type and therefore imperfect and transient, from that which belonged to this eternal purpose. We see in the end of Samuel (2 Sam. xxiii. 5, *notes*) how David there would have us distinguish. Here there is the same separation: the fourth section gives us the conditional promise, in connection, however, with that which is not so; while the fifth section speaks only of the unconditional.

The unconditional purpose is first of all shown as the basis of the conditional. But here David is, however, simply the historical person: "Jehovah hath sworn unto David in truth; He will not turn from it: Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." Here, plainly, is something more than Solomon. David is to have a throne upon which a Son of his shall sit unchangingly. Christ is not named, but can alone be this "Son of David,"— not David, but his Son.

* Ephratah seems to be certainly not Bethlehem,— which would answer neither to the conditions nor the history,— but the district in which Kirjath Jearim was situated, *Caleb*-ephratah (1 Chr. ii. 24), named from Caleb's wife Ephratah, whose son Shobal was the "father of Kirjath-jearim" (ver. 50). This was the view of Delitzsch and Hitzig.

(ii.) the succession.

If thy children [k]keep my covenant,
and my testimony that I teach them,
[l]their children shall also sit upon thy throne for aye.

5 (13–18): Immanu-el.
(i.) sovereign purpose.
(ii.) the attachment of love.
(iii.) satisfaction.
(iv.) provision for frailty.
(v.) the recompense.
(vi.) the triumph.

For Jehovah hath [m]chosen Zion:
he hath desired it for a habitation for himself:
This is my [n]resting-place for aye:
here will I dwell, for I have desired it.
I will [o]abundantly bless her provision;
I will [p]satisfy her needy ones with bread.
I will also [q]clothe her priests with salvation;
and her pious ones shall [r]shout aloud with joy.
There will I cause the horn of David to [s]bud forth:
I have set in order a [t]lamp for mine anointed.
His enemies will I clothe with [u]shame:
and upon himself shall his crown [v]flourish.

k *cf.* 2 Sam. 7. 14.
l Ps. 89. 29, 36.
m Ps. 48.1,2.
n Ps. 78. 68. Ps. 68. 16. *cf.* Is.11.10.
o *cf.* Ps. 107. 5, 9.
p Ps. 103. 5.
q ver. 9.
r Ps. 32. 11.
s Ezek. 29. 21. Ps. 89. 17.
t *cf.* 1 Ki.11. 36. *cf.*2 Sam.21. 17.
u Ps.35.4,26.
v *cf.* Is. 4. 2. *cf.* Ps. 21.3.

In contrast with this we have then the conditional promise: "If thy children keep My covenant, and My testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for aye." Here is what explains the long history of failure. The promise, like that as to Abraham's seed, has its two different — and in some sense contrasted — applications. The fulfillment seems fitful and uncertain until the eye rests on Christ; and then, through Him at last, even that on the lower plane is finally secured.

5. But then we pass from that which is conditional to sovereign purpose; and here, though the fulfillment may be delayed, there is nothing but absolute assurance. We can see, too, that it is the real and full answer to the prayer of the first part of the psalm. In this again Christ is the antitypical David, and the blessing is eternal.

Again we see that God's everlasting purpose alone explains all the rest:—

"*For* Jehovah hath chosen Zion: He hath desired it for a habitation for Himself. This is My resting-place for aye: here will I dwell, for I have desired it." Here we see, indeed, how God rests in His love,— because His heart is satisfied.

Here He pours out His heart, therefore: "I will abundantly bless her provision; I will satisfy her needy ones with bread." While grace more than answers the desire for its tender ministrations: "I will also clothe her priests with salvation,"— a security greater than that of any personal righteousness of man; "and her pious ones"— not *holy* ones, as separate from evil, but *godly* rather, as with heart for God —"shall shout"— aye, "shall shout *aloud* for joy."

And here, in the everlasting city, the horn of David's power shall bud forth at last, without any check or intermittence. "I will set in order a lamp for Mine Anointed." Now there is final triumph: "His enemies will I clothe with shame; but upon Himself shall His crown flourish."

Psalm CXXXIII.

Zion, then, has her glorious King, and the divine dwelling-place is in her midst. The priestly service is established, but we have not yet caught sight of the High Priest Himself. Now we are to do so: how fatal a defect would it be, if He did not appear. For all the lesser priests without Him are of no value. They hold but a derived office. And on the great day of atonement all other priests must needs retire to make way for Him.

Moreover, the King alone, as such, will not suffice to bring in blessing for man. Melchizedek may bless Abraham; but only as priest of the Most High God can do so.

The King may indeed build the house of God, as we have seen; but only the Priest can furnish it. Nay, only his work can lay the foundation either. Where

Ps. cxxxiii.

[2]PSALM CXXXIII.

The Priestly Mediator's service.

A song of the ascents: of David.

(i.) unity.

BEHOLD how good and how pleasant it is,
for brethren to dwell together in [w]unity.

(ii.) dependent on the Mediator.

[It is] like the [x]precious oil upon the head,
that ran down upon the beard,—
upon Aaron's beard,—
that ran down to the [y]hem of his garments.

(iii.) and realized through the Spirit of holiness.

As the [z]dew of Hermon,
that descendeth on the [a]mountains of Zion:
for there hath Jehovah commanded the [b]blessing,
life for [c]evermore.

Ps. cxxxiv.

[3]PSALM CXXXIV.

In the Sanctuary.

A song of the ascents.

(i.) constant, universal praise.

BEHOLD, bless Jehovah, all ye [d]servants of Jehovah,
who stand by [e]night in the house of Jehovah.

w *cf.* Is. 11. 13. *cf.* Ezek. 37. 16, 17.
x Ex. 30. 25, 30. *cf.* Jer. 23. 5, 6.
y Ex. 28. 33-35.
z *cf.* Deut. 3. 8. *cf.* Hos. 14. 5.
a Ps. 125. 1, 2.
b Ps. 69. 28. *cf.* Lev. 25. 21. Deut. 28. 8.
c Ps. 121. 8.
d Ps. 135. 1, 2.
e 1 Chr. 9. 33.

in answer to the sweet savor of accepted sacrifice the angel of destruction puts his sword into its sheath again, there David says is to be the house of God (1 Chr. xxii. 1). The same thing is suggested in the beginning of the last psalm, where David's trouble is what is to be remembered to him. In the present one we have, on the other hand, the Priest, but no sacrificial work. It is plain that we have to follow out the suggestions contained in each with the aid of knowledge derived from elsewhere.

Israel are now presenting the lovely spectacle of a brotherhood in unity among themselves. It is a spiritual unity, too, that characterizes them, as is evident by the similitude employed, which is not merely such, but a true type. This anointing of Aaron, which was without blood, was the testimony of God's delight in Christ in the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Him for His official work,—the justification of the divine delight in man as seen in Him. Thus from Him it flows to others, although not in their case without blood. The connection of the Priestly Mediator with the pouring out of the Spirit from on high (Isa. xxxii. 15) on Israel is plainly what is emphasized in this.

The dew of Hermon is a different figure. Like a "great white throne," seen through a large part of the land, and from which the river of death runs down to the salt sea of judgment, Hermon speaks, as we have seen elsewhere, of the ban upon evil (Ps. xlii. 6, *notes*). Upon the execution of this depends all the blessing of Israel; and the "dew of Hermon," apart from the consideration of natural causes, though not without their operation, might easily be believed to be as abundant and refreshing as in fact it is. The spiritual dew of Hermon is now descending on the mountains of Zion, purged as they are from all the evil of the past, and consecrated to God for ever: "for there hath Jehovah commanded the blessing, even life for evermore."

Hence we see what brotherhood in Israel is, from henceforth. It is in the new life to which men must be born again, that they may enter the kingdom. Israel has become a nation such as never was before,—a people all holy (Isa. iv. 3). The new covenant is now their abiding security.

PSALM CXXXIV.

The last song of ascents shows us Israel in the sanctuary, the night bringing no cessation of constant praise, the praise of a dependent people, rich with the blessing of Jehovah their God. This is, in brief, its three portions.

Here the work of the true Melchizedek is seen, the One who as Man leads out

(ii.) with the prayer of dependentones.
(iii.) the full blessing.

Lift up your hands to the [f]sanctuary,*
and bless Jehovah.
Jehovah bless thee [g]out of Zion,—
he who [h]made heaven and earth.

[f] Ps. 84. 4.
[g] Ps. 128. 9.
[h] Ps.121. 2.

SECTION 2. (Ps. cxxxv, cxxxvi.)
The testimony of history confirmed.

Ps. cxxxv.

[1]PSALM CXXXV.

The summons to render it.

1 (1-7): Sovereign Lord and Disposer of all.
(i.) Jehovah.
(ii.) from His servants.
(iii.) for His Name.
(iv.) His mercy to Jacob.
(v.) the weak with the Strong.
(vi.) Master!

[i]HALLELUJAH!
praise ye the [j]Name of Jehovah:
praise, ye [k]servants of Jehovah.
Ye who [l]stand in the house of Jehovah:
in the courts of the house of our God.
Praise ye Jah, for Jehovah is [m]good:
psalm unto his Name, for it is pleasant.
For [n]Jacob hath Jah chosen for himself:
Israel for his own possession.
For *I* know that Jehovah is [o]great:
and our Lord is above all gods.
Whatever Jehovah [p]pleased, that he hath done,
in heaven and in earth,
in the [q]seas and in all the deeps.

[i] Ps. 111. 1.
[j] Ps. 113. 1.
[k] *cf.* Is. 53. 17.
[l] Ps. 134. 1.
[m] Ps. 107. 1.
[n] Is. 43. 1. Deut. 7.6,7.
[o] Ps. 95. 3. Ps. 115. 3.
[p] 1 Chr. 16. 25.
[q] *cf.* Ps. 148. 7.

*Or holily.

His people's heart in a praise in which He is foremost. While as God, the Representative of God, He can pronounce and bring in the blessing. This is Immanuel and Melchizedek in one; and that is the end here. Everything is in His hand who is the Father of eternity, the Maker and Upholder of the new creation. And here the last "ascent" is fully reached.

Sec. 2.

The two psalms that follow are evidently a supplementary section, in which Israel's witness to God is given, the acknowledgment which shall at last be made to Him as to His ways of perfect faithfulness and wisdom all through His dealings with them. There is a peculiarity in these psalms which this accounts for, that they both take up mainly the deliverance from Egypt and their being brought into the land; His latter-day mercies to them only being brought in at the end, as if the completion of this, which no doubt is the truth. All their history between has been but an interruption of the blessing then ready to come, which their unbelief put away from them for the many generations that have intervened. Then, at last, that old Egyptian deliverance will be, as it were, repeated in a still more wondrous way: the broken-off history will be taken up again and completed, and thus its meaning will be at last fully shown.

PSALM CXXXV.

The first of these psalms is the summons to celebrate this, to which the second is the response. In this recalling of their old history there are doubtless abundant lessons which we carelessly overlook, just because we are so familiar with it; and here the numerals ought to afford signal help, only that here also we are but too dull, though for an opposite reason.

1. We have first the exhortation to praise Jehovah as the Sovereign Lord and Disposer of all, and who has been pleased in this way to take up Jacob for Himself,—not surely for good in Jacob. He who has done so is Lord above all gods, with which His people have, alas, so constantly compared Him,—inconceivably

(vii.) complete power.

Who causeth [r] vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth:
he maketh [s] lightnings for the rain:
he bringeth the [t] wind out of his treasuries.

2 (8-12.): Deliverer.
(i.) the first-born.

Who [u] smote the first-born of Egypt:
both man and beast.

(ii.) the testimony in delivering.

He sent [v] signs and wonders, O Egypt, into the midst of thee,
upon Pharaoh and upon all his servants.

(iii.) in the inheritance (?)

Who smote [w] many nations,
and slew mighty kings:
[x] Sihon, king of the Amorites,
and [y] Og, king of Bashan,
and [z] all the kingdoms of Canaan.

(iv.) the nations yielding.

And he gave their land for an [a] inheritance,
for an inheritance to Israel his people.

(v.) government.

3 (13, 14): Now returning to His people.
(i.) enduring praise,

Jehovah, thy [b] Name [endureth] for ever;
the remembrance of thee, Jehovah, for all generations.*

(ii.) as judging in their behalf.

For Jehovah [c] judgeth his people,
and [d] repenteth himself for his servants.

4 (15-18): The vanity of idols.
(i.) their origin.

The [e] idols of the nations are silver and gold,
the work of men's hands.

(ii.) witnesses that witness not.

They have a [f] mouth and speak not;
[g] eyes have they, and see not:
[h] Ears have they, and hear not:
nor is their [i] breath in their mouths.

(iii.) unreality.

They that make them are [j] like unto them:
[and] every one that [k] trusteth in them.

(iv.) vanity all together.

* "generation and generation."

r Jer. 10. 13. *cf.* Gen. 2. 6.
s Job. 38. 25, 26. Ps. 97. 4. Zech. 10. 1.
t *cf.* Job 38. 22. Prov. 30. 4.
u Ex. 12. 29, 30. Ps. 78. 51. Ps 105. 36. Ps. 136. 10.
v Ps. 105. 27.
w Deut. 4. 38. Josh. 23. 9.
x Num. 21. 21-30.
y Num. 21. 31-35.
z Josh. 12.
a Josh. 14. 1 etc.
b Ex. 3. 15. *cf.* Mal. 3. 6. *cf.* Heb. 13. 8.
c Deut. 32. 32. *cf.* Heb. 10. 30.
d *cf.* Ps. 90. 13. *cf.* Hos. 11. 8. *cf.* Jer. 42. 10.
e Ps. 115. 4-18, *ref's*
f *ctr.* Ex. 20. 1, etc.
g *ctr.* Prov. 15. 3.
h *ctr.* Mal. 3. 16.
i *cf.* Rev. 13. 15. *ctr.* Gen. 2. 7.
j *ctr.* Ps. 50. 21. *ctr.* Is. 40. 18.
k Is. 42. 17, 18; *ctr.* Ps. 125. 1.

great unto those so infinitely little. But Jehovah has done, spite of all opposition, just what He pleased in heaven and in earth. Vapor, and rain, and lightning, and wind — all the apparatus of storm — are in His hand, and made to serve His beneficent purposes.

2. The psalmist then recalls His ways as the Deliverer of His people in Egypt, and right on into the land. The smiting of the first-born was the blow that struck off their shackles from them, though part only of a succession of signs and wonders in which He had displayed Himself for their deliverance. In the land given them for an inheritance also He smote many nations and mighty kings, and gave their land unto His people.

3. Briefly as all this is spoken of, a briefer section still speaks of His return now to the fulfillment of His purposes of love then intimated, now for so long seeming to be set altogether aside. Yet the words of Moses' song quoted (ver. 14) show that all this had been anticipated before ever the land was entered. And this would be His remembrance for all generations that Jehovah had taken up again the cause of His people, to judge it in all its reality, not passing over the evil, and yet repenting for those now returned to be His servants.

4. Here again, therefore, and in language which is almost identical with that of the 115th psalm, the rebuke of the senseless idolatry which degraded its followers to its own level. Compare the notes upon the former psalm.

5. Israel are exhorted to go on with their own covenant-God, alone worthy of

5 (19-21): Israel with God.
(i.)
(ii.)
(iii.) praise from the sanctuary.

O [t]house of Israel, bless ye Jehovah;
O [m]house of Aaron, bless ye Jehovah:
O [n]house of Levi, bless ye Jehovah;
ye that [o]fear Jehovah, bless ye Jehovah.
Blessed be Jehovah [p]out of Zion:
who [q]dwelleth at Jerusalem:
Hallelujah.

[t] Ps.118.2-4.
[m] Ps. 132. 9.
[n] Mal. 3. 3.
[o] Ps. 34. 9.
[p] Ps. 134. 3.
[q] Ps. 132. 13, 14.

Ps. cxxxvi.

[2]PSALM CXXXVI.

The confirmation.

1 (1-3): Jehovah in Himself.
(i.) Jehovah
(ii.) in contrast with other gods.
(iii.) now manifest.

GIVE thanks to Jehovah, for he is [r]good:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
Give thanks unto the [s]God of gods:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
Give thanks unto the [t]Lord of lords:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.

[r] Ps. 106. 1. Ps. 107. 1.
[s] Deut. 10. 17. Josh. 22.22.
[t] Rev. 19.16.

2 (4-9): In His works of wisdom.
(i.) sole in power.
(ii.) the work of the second day.
(iii.) of the third day.

To him who alone doeth [u]great wonders:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
To him who by understanding [v]made the heavens:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
To him who stretched out the [w]earth above the waters:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.

[u] Ps. 72. 18. Ps. 86. 10.
[v] Prov.3.19. Jer. 10. 12.
[w] Is. 42. 5. Gen.1. 9,10. *cf.* Ex.20.4.

all blessing and praise, and now with them in His fixed abode in Zion. The first two verses of this last section correspond essentially also with the exhortation of the 115th psalm; but here the house of Levi is added to the house of Aaron, though structurally joined with those "that fear Jehovah." I am unable to assign a reason for this, and so for the numerical significance of these two verses.

Psalm CXXXVI.

The answer is now given to this call to bear witness, and the ground traveled over in the former psalm is gone over here again, but in short sentences to every one of which the celebration of Jehovah's loving-kindness in what is spoken of is attached. Be it creation, be it redemption, judgment on their enemies, or mercy to themselves, this seal is set upon all His work, that Jehovah's loving-kindness has been working in it. And indeed in all His acts all that He is must act: if He be good, as God is, He must be good in everything He does.

1. First of all He is Jehovah, the Unchangeable, the covenant-God; God of gods, the alone Supreme, and Lord of lords,—exhibiting now this supremacy.

2. Then He is spoken of in His works of wisdom, the One who alone doeth great wonders. His creative work—as given in the second, third, and fourth verses—evidently corresponds to that of the second, third, and fourth of the six days. The second speaks of the firmament of the heavens, therefore, the separation of the waters from the waters. The third, of the bringing up of the dry land from under the waters, by which man's abode was formed for him. The fourth, of the luminaries, which condition, by the changing seasons which they occasion, all the activities of his practical life.* But this the psalmist cannot pass so briefly, but must expand it in the two following verses. In the fifth place, the sun, as ruler in the day, is really the physical governor of man's earth, and so of man: among material things the fullest representative of that goodness of God which wakes up all Nature in response, to minister to him. The moon, on the other hand, is but, as it were, a delegate of the sun, and can only imperfectly reflect his rays so as to limit the darkness. All this has abundance of teaching for us, and

*See Appendix III., on the Numerals, at the end of the volume.

(iv.) of the fourth.
(v.) the ruler by day.
(vi.) limiting the darkness.

To him that made great [x]lights:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
The [y]sun to rule over the day:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
The [z]moon and the stars to rule over the night:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.

3 (10-16): Manifest for His people.
(i.) the first-born.
(ii.) the bringing out.
(iii.) signs manifest.
(iv.) the sea yielding.
(v.) Himself with them.
(vi.) victory over Pharaoh.
(vii.) the completion in the wilderness.

To him who [a]smote Egypt in their first-born:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
And [b]brought out Israel from among them:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
With a [c]strong hand and with a stretched-out arm:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
To him who [d]divided the Red Sea into parts:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
And made Israel [e]pass through the midst of it:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
And [f]overturned Pharaoh and his force in the Red Sea:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
To him who [g]led his people in the wilderness:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.

4 (17-22): The nations yielding.
a (17, 18): Kings—
(i.) great and
(ii.) famous.
b (19, 20): the double opposition.
(i.) Sihon.
(ii.) Og.
c (20, 21): the inheritance.
(i.) given of God.
(ii.) to His servant.

To him who [h]smote great kings:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
And slew [i]famous kings:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
[j]Sihon, king of the Amorites:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
And [k]Og the king of Bashan:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
And gave their land for an [l]inheritance:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
An inheritance to Israel his [m]servant:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.

[x] Gen. 1.14-18.
[y] Ps. 19.4-6.
[z] Ps. 8. 3.
[a] Ps. 135. 8.
[b] Ex. 12. 51.
[c] Ex. 6. 6. Jer. 32. 21.
[d] Ex. 14. 21. Neh. 9. 11.
[e] Ex. 15. 13.
[f] Ps. 135. 9.
[g] Deut. 8. 15.
[h] Ps. 135. 10.
[i] *cf.* Gen. 10. 8, 9.
[j] Ps. 135. 11.
[k] Josh. 2. 10.
[l] Ps. 135. 12.
[m] Is. 44. 1.

should help to make Nature, what God would have it for us, a great open lesson-book. But we have not space to dwell upon it here.*

3. The psalmist turns now to speak of God's manifestations of Himself for His peculiar people; and as in the previous psalm, but in more detail, speaks first of His wonders in Egypt. First, the smiting of the first-born, smiting off their fetters. Then what was the direct consequence, their being brought out; the outstretched arm which manifested Him to all in this; the Sea yielding to His hand, and Himself bringing the people through; the victory over Pharaoh and all his host. The brief notice of the wilderness rounds off this section, completing, as it were, the deliverance in Egypt.

4. We now come to the land, in which the nations, dispossessed because of their sin, have now to yield to Israel their inheritance. The six verses here seem to be plainly three couplets: the first dwelling upon the power of those who are made to yield; the second specifies the twin Amorite kingdoms that opposed themselves at the threshold of their inheritance; the third speaks of the inheritance itself as made over to them. The language is of the very briefest. What seems possible in the way of spiritual application has been elsewhere dwelt upon; but here it is

*See, for more remarks on this, Appendix III., on the Creative Days.

5 (23-26): The weak with the Strong. (i.) faithfulness in grace. (ii.) the new redemption. (iii.) full satisfaction. (iv.) the praise of the whole earth.

Who remembered us in our [n] low estate:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
And hath [o] redeemed us from our oppressors:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
Who giveth [p] food to all flesh:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.
Oh give [q] thanks unto the God * of heaven:
for his loving-kindness [endureth] for ever.

n Ps. 113. 7. Ps. 138. 6.
o Ps. 107. 1, 2.
p Ps. 104. 27, 28.
q *cf.* Neh. 1. 4. Neh. 2. 4.

SUBDIVISION 4. (Ps. cxxxvii.-cxlv.)

The testing of man and things, which makes Jehovah all.

SECTION 1. (Ps. cxxxvii.-cxxxix.)

"Truth in the inward parts."

Ps. cxxxvii.

[1] PSALM CXXXVII.

Zion the one controlling object for the heart of the solitary (as cut off from Jehovah's presence.)

1 (1-3): The occasion. (i.) solitary. (ii.) apart from joy.

BY the [r] rivers of Babel, there we sat down:
yea, we [s] wept when we remembered Zion.
Upon the willows in the midst of it,
we [t] hung our harps.

r *cf.* 2 Chr. 36. 20. *cf.* Ezek. 1. 3. *cf.* Dan. 8. 2.
s *cf.* Jer. 22. 10. *cf.* Ps. 42. 3.
t *cf.* Prov. 25. 20.

* El.

Israel's song of praise, and doubtless for them these old histories may have new light shed upon them by their latter-day experiences.

5. The psalm closes with God's remembrance of their low estate, and their new deliverance in the time to which the Psalms as a whole so constantly point forward. The third verse abruptly widens out to the acknowledgment of the full satisfaction for all flesh which the Lord of all has provided, and which may be surely applied in the fullest way to every kind of need. With Israel's blessing, we are reminded that the blessing of the whole earth comes in; and the last verse may naturally be taken as the praise of all.

SUBD. 4.

After the realization of the blessing in this manner, we come in the fourth subdivision finally to the consideration once again of the vanity of the creature apart from God, as, alas, man has been,—the cause of all his sorrows. Now that he may be blessed, and abide in blessing, he must accept fully the creature-place, which is not a bad but a good and happy one, seeing that his Creator is good. And the voice that affirms this in the last psalm of this series, if it be, as it seems to be, Messiah's (the true "*David*'s) praise" is indeed a conclusive—a glorious—voucher for it. But man must keep this place, then, and thus it is that so earnestly, so perseveringly, the truth, so unwelcome to his pride, must be pressed upon him.

Sec. 1.

Thus we face in the opening psalm that which branded those, hitherto the people of God, as Lo-ammi, "not my people:" the only psalm which speaks openly of Babel. There, in the place of judgment, however, the heart is turned to God, and the deliverance of the lowly—of those truly humbled before God—is found in the very next one. The third shows us now one searched out and manifested to himself in the presence of God, and his heart taught to welcome the searching. Here the holiness of God becomes to him truly a delight, and he would put the ban, not merely upon Edom or Babylon, but upon all in himself that could be found in opposition to him. The first section shows very clearly the character of the whole. It gives the fundamental thought, though there is naturally an advance in those that follow, but only as building upon this foundation. "Truth

(iii.) the realization.

For there our captors [u] demanded of us words of song,
and they that made us wail, gladness, [saying],
Sing us one of the [v] songs of Zion.

2 (4-6): Cleaving.
(i.) *Jehovah's* song!
(ii.) no separation.
(iii.) the heart possessed by its remembrances.

How shall we sing Jehovah's song,
in a [w] foreign land?
If I [x] forget thee, Jerusalem,
let my right hand forget!
Let my [y] tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I remember thee not!
if I [z] exalt not Jerusalem above my chief joy!

3 (7-9): The return of the ban.
(i.) the ground as to Edom.
(ii.) the destruction of the destroyer.
(iii.) the ban fulfilled.

Remember, Jehovah, against the children of [a] Edom
the day of Jerusalem:
who said, Rase it, rase it, even to its foundation.
O daughter of Babel, who art to be [b] laid waste,
[c] happy is he who recompenseth thee,
the reward with which thou hast rewarded us!
Happy is he who taketh and [d] dasheth thy little ones
against the rock.

u *cf.* Judges 16. 25.
v *cf.* Ps. 122.
w *cf.* Deut. 28. 47, 48.
x *cf.* Ps. 102. 13, 14.
y *cf.* Dan. 9. 2, 3.
z *cf.* Ps. 43.4 with Ps. 48. 2.
a *cf.* Obad.1, etc. *cf.* Amos 1. 11, 12. *cf.* Lam. 4. 22.
b *cf.* Is. 13, etc. *cf.* Jer. 50. etc.
c *cf.* Rev.18. 6.
d *cf.* Is.13.16. *cf.* Nah. 3. 10.

in the inward parts" is what is very clearly the subject of the section: a blessed thing to know in absolute reality. The lips of unerring truth have said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

Psalm CXXXVII.

1. In the first psalm, then, here, as already said, we are with the captives in Babylon. The plenteous streams that once enriched with unfailing fertility "the glory of the Chaldee's excellency" are before their eyes only to remind them that they are far from Zion, and to minister to the awful home-sickness of men who realized, as Jews alone could do, what it was to be cut off from the one place of the presence of God. How unutterable the loneliness, amid crowds that might press around them, of such a condition. There then they sat down — all labor a vain labor there! — to weep as their unflagging memories called up before them the image of Zion. Estranged from joy, they hung their harps upon the willows, in resolute denial of the request of those who had carried them captive for "words of song,"—mere "words" they would be, without music now,—"saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion."

2. What could they know — these heathen — of "*Jehovah's* songs," or the reproach which they would ring with, to the people of God (alas, such no longer) gone as captives into a strange land? In Jerusalem alone could the blood of atonement — and "without shedding of blood is no remission" — be sprinkled upon the golden mercy-seat, that a holy God might dwell among the praises of His people. It was but a waste spot now; yet there with inseparable attachment their hearts lingered. Their right hand might well forget, if Jerusalem were forgotten. The tongue might cleave to the roof of the mouth that exalted not Jerusalem above every other object of joy.

3. There is no mention of their *sins*, however, in all this. — no confession. It is the desolation of those who are away from the place of Jehovah's manifestation, with the prayer only for judgment upon their enemies, who have destroyed or sympathized with the destruction of the home of their affections, in language from which the Christian naturally shrinks. But Edom and Babylon are both doomed by the prophets to extinction as a people; and to this doom of the latter there is distinct reference made here. Judgment is God's strange work: we may be sure, a necessary one; and the solemn part which God has made His people sometimes take in it, as in the case of the nations of Canaan, has doubtless its deep necessity also. Calamities involve commonly enough babes as well as par-

Ps. cxxxviii.

[2]PSALM CXXXVIII.

The deliverance of the lowly, magnifying the word of God.

[A psalm] of David.

1 (1-5):United praise. (i.) whole-hearted praise.

I WILL give thee thanks with [e]all my heart:
before the [f]gods will I psalm unto thee.
I will worship [g]toward thy holy temple, and confess thy Name,
for thy [h]loving-kindness and for thy truth:
for thou hast [i]magnified thy saying in accordance with all thy Name.

(ii.) thou hast magnified thy word.

(iii.) realized answer.

In the day when I [j]called thou answeredst me;
thou didst embolden me with strength in my soul.

[e] Ps. 9. 1. Ps. 111. 1.
[f] Ps. 82. 1,6, 7.
[g] Ps. 5. 7.
[h] Jer. 9. 24.
[i] Is. 42. 21. *cf.* 2 Sam. 7. 21, 22.
[j] Ps. 50. 15. Nah. 1. 7.

ents; while, of course, they are but the short and passing evils, which leave the eternity following to make up the balance-sheet.

PSALM CXXXVIII.

The second psalm of the series is in such decided contrast with the first that it is somewhat hard to realize the connection; although this contrast is in fact part of the connection. The present psalm is praise all through: the harp is not on the willows, but in the hand; and the praise is not that of Israel only, but (in anticipation, at least) from all the earth. God has fulfilled His word in such a manner as to bring out in full reality the meaning of His Name; and in doing this He has acted as the God of judgment, abasing the proud and exalting the lowly, giving to His people that truth in the inward parts without which the deliverance itself could not be truly that.

This shows, I believe, the connection with the previous psalm, where in Babylon is seen the ruin wrought, and in which they have learned to cry after Jehovah: "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses." Such is the lesson of the opening psalm of this fifth book: so simple as hardly to be called such, and yet in effect the moral of all man's history — self-caused ruin, the cry after the Father's house only forced out by the famine, and yet the open arms to receive a wanderer home. Thank God, for the soul really awakened to its need, those embracing arms can do a work which nothing else can, and the lost and found becomes by this one brought to life from the dead.

1. The psalmist evidently voices the praise of Israel, now praising with the whole heart. "Before the gods" speaks of those who are called gods as representing God in places of authority, the judges of the earth. They are now called to contemplate and admire the judgments of Jehovah with regard especially to Israel as the great object lesson placed by Him before their eyes. There is once more among His people a temple to His praise, and toward which the eyes of the worshiper are turned, because of the Living Presence connected with it. And His Name has been declared in loving-kindness and in truth; His saying magnified according to all the value of that Name, which the fulfillment of it has now declared.* Nay, in the very day in which His people cried unto Him, He answered, and infused new courage into their drooping souls.

* This seems to me the meaning of what is here ordinarily rendered "Thou hast magnified Thy word *above* all Thy Name"; but if God's Name is just the revelation of Himself, it is hard to know in what way we are to take this. The only thing that seems possible to imagine in this case, is, as usually done, that His Name stands here for the revelation of Himself up to this time, which His present action has now transcended. And some would bring in the thought of the *Personal* Word—Christ—as One who, as Christianity has now declared Him, has indeed transcended all previous manifestations. The truth of this no one would think of disputing: the question can only be of the application of this to what is here. Certainly Christianity does not seem at all to be implied; and "Thy saying," as it literally is, would scarcely seem to convey the thought of the Personal Word. It naturally speaks of the fulfillment of some promise or promises that had been made, and to which now perhaps a deeper meaning had

(iv.) the earth yielding.

(v.) Jehovah's ways.

All the [k]kings of the earth shall confess thee, Jehovah:
when they hear the sayings of thy mouth.
And they shall sing of the ways of Jehovah,
that [l]great is the glory of Jehovah.

2 (6-8): The God of judgment. (i.) the Supreme and the proud. (li.) His deliverance.

For Jehovah is high, and regardeth the [m]humble,
but the [n]proud he knoweth from afar.
Though I walk in the [o]midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me:
thou wilt [p]stretch forth thy hand against the wrath of mine enemies;
and thy right hand shall [q]save me.
Jehovah will [r]perfect that which concerneth me:
Jehovah, thy [s]loving-kindness [endureth] for ever;
[t]forsake not the works of thine own hands.

(iii.) full accomplishment.

[3]PSALM CXXXIX.

Ps. cxxxix.

Manifest in the presence of God, with the moral result of this.

To the chief musician, a psalm of David.

1 (1-6): Jehovah's omniscience. α (1, 2): knowledge. (i.) myself fully known. (ii.) diverse acts and distant thought.

JEHOVAH, thou hast [u]searched me out,
and knowest [me.]
Thou knowest my [v]downsitting and mine uprising:
thou understandest my [w]thought afar off.

k *cf.* Ps. 72. 10, 11. Ps. 102. 15, 22.
l *cf.* Is. 66. 19. *cf.* Mal. 1. 11.
m Ps. 113. 5, 6. Is. 57. 15.
n Prov. 6. 16, 17. Jas. 4. 6.
o Ps. 23. 4. Ps. 71. 20.
p Ps. 139. 10.
q Ps. 17. 7.
r *cf.* Phil. 1. 6.
s Ps. 136. 1, etc.
t Ps. 119. 73. *cf.* Rom. 8. 29-32.
u Ps. 44. 21. Jer. 17. 10. *cf.* vers. 23, 24. *ctr.* Job 11. 7.
v *cf.* Is. 37. 28. *cf.* Deut. 6. 6, 7.
w *cf.* Gen. 6. 5. *cf.* Matt. 9. 4. *cf.* Jno. 21. 15-17.

Now all the kings of the earth, when *they* hear the sayings of Jehovah, shall also confess Him; and, weary at last of their own ways, in which they have so long been walking, they shall sing of the ways of Jehovah, that great is His glory. Thus the misrule of the earth shall cease.

2. And now what gives them this apprehension of Jehovah's ways is intimated. The Supreme — seen to be that — yet regardeth the humble; while He knoweth the proud too, but afar off. Israel brought out of her low estate, and delivered from the wrath of her enemies, will declare this; perfectly accomplishing that which concerns her. And for this, in the conviction of His eternal loving-kindness, she prays, that He may not forsake the work of His own hands.

Psalm CXXXIX.

The last verse of the previous psalm, as so often is the case, leads on to the psalm that follows it. We see in this how truly we are the work of God's hands, and the marvelousness of this work; and this naturally leads further to the recognition that we are still in His hands, who made us, and who will not forsake His work. Thus under His eye, searched out in the light of His presence, we yet realize the blessedness of this, and find with Him our sanctuary-refuge from the evil in ourselves as elsewhere.

The psalm has a peculiar and elaborate structure, quite suited to the character of its contents: the regularity of it showing the perfect divine control of material, which belongs to the Creator of all. Its twenty-four verses are divided into four parts, — the number of testing, — each of six verses, the number of discipline and of mastery of evil; while each of these is again divided into three parts of two verses each, the numbers of manifestation and of witness together.

The first section speaks of Jehovah's omniscience simply, as realized by one

been imparted in their fulfillment. But this hardly seems to suit the connection. For the psalmist has just been saying "I will *confess Thy Name*, for Thy loving kindness and for Thy truth's sake"; and this is how he illustrates Jehovah's truth: "for Thou hast magnified Thy saying in accordance with all Thy Name":—Thou hast fulfilled it in such a manner as to bring out all that Thy Name implies. The deliverance of Israel is what the psalm speaks of, and Christ does not seem to be mentioned in it.

Thou [x]searchest* my path and my lying down,
and art acquainted with [y]all my ways.
For there is not yet a [z]word on my tongue,
[but] lo, Jehovah, thou knowest it altogether.
Thou hast beset me [a]behind and before,
and laid thy hand on me.
Knowledge too [b]wonderful for me!
it is high, I am not competent for it.

[c]Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?
and whither shall I flee from thy presence?
If I ascend to [d]heaven, thou art there:
and if I make my bed in [e]Sheol, behold, thou [art there.]
[If] I take the [f]wings of the dawn,
[or] dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
Even there shall thy hand [g]lead me,
and thy right hand hold me.
If I say, Surely the [h]darkness shall cover me,
even the night shall be light about me.
Yea, the darkness darkeneth not from thee,
and the [i]night shineth as the day:
the darkness and the light are both alike.

* winnowest.

b (3, 4): discernment. (i.) of me as a whole. (ii.) my words.
c (5, 6): compassed round. (i.) with power. (ii.) which humbles man.
2 (7-12): Whither, away from Thee?
a (7, 8): Omnipresent! (i.) Spirit and presence. (ii.) in heaven or sheol.
b (9, 10): I the dependent! (i.) solitariness (?) (ii.) yet in dependent relation.
c (11,12): ever manifest. (i.) darkness as light. (ii.) in relation to Thee.

x Job 34. 21. *y* Prov. 5. 21.
z *cf.* Lk. 12. 3.
a ver. 7.
b *cf.* Job 42. 3. *cf.* Ps. 73. 16.
c Jer. 23. 24.
d *cf.* Job 20. 5–7. *cf.* Jer. 51. 53. *cf.* Obad. 4.
e *cf.* Amos 9. 2–4. *cf.* Job 26. 6. *cf.* Prov. 15. 11.
f *cf.* Jonah 1. 3.
g *cf.* 1 Ki. 19. 4–8.
h Job 34. 22.
i *cf.* Gen. 3. 8–10. *cf.* Heb. 4. 12, 13. Dan. 2. 22.

who is under the awe of it,—a fear which in the second section breaks out into the cry of one who would fain escape to the ends of the earth or into Sheol itself to be free from it, but knows well the impossibility of this. In the third section there is a change, however, and a tender thankfulness comes in with the thought of how in the very womb of his mother this omniscience had been exercised in building up in mysterious secrecy the marvelous structure of the future man. The preciousness of God's thoughts toward him now take possession of him, and that, sleeping or waking, the unslumbering Eye is on him becomes only happiness. In the fourth section he is now with God against the evil manifested in the world, and from that which he fears and hates within himself, the presence of God becomes now his sanctuary-refuge. He invites the searching Eye which once he dreaded. But we must take up the psalm in detail.

1. The first section, as already said, speaks of Jehovah's omniscience; the first two verses, as knowledge simply, though the Light never withdrawn searches all out. But in the next verses. He *winnows* the path,—an intimation of discriminating judgment which would imply, as result, thorough "acquaintance" or "familiarity" with all the ways. And the words are known altogether,—all that can be known of them. The third subsection speaks not simply of knowledge, but of action: "Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid Thy hand on me." He realizes, as well he may, this knowledge as too wonderful for him,—an unattainable height.

2. In the next section the three smaller divisions are similarly distinguishable. In the first, Spirit and presence are, I suppose, the same essentially, while heaven and hell—Sheol or hades, not Gehenna.—are wide asunder: it is omnipresence simply that is in question. In the next, it is relation to the Omnipresent, and that in dependence: the wings of the dawn and the uttermost parts of the sea convey the thought apparently of the utmost solitude; but "even there shall Thy hand lead me and Thy right hand hold me." In the third, exposure is what he cannot escape: darkness and light are relative only to man; for God there is no difference.

3. In the third section we come to that which is the full expression for the

a (13, 14): omniscient power.
(i.) my beginning.
(ii.) my making.
b (15, 16): discerning wisdom.
(i.) unity of plan.
(ii.) progressing diversity.
c (17, 18): The contained revelation.
(i.) the sum.
(ii.) the number.

For thou hast acquired my [j] reins:
thou coveredst me in my [k] mother's womb.
I will praise thee, for I am fearfully, [l] wonderfully made:
marvelous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well.
My frame was not hid from thee,
when I was made in [m] secret,—
embroidered in under-parts of earth.
Thine eyes did see mine inwrapping,
and in thy [n] scroll all [parts] were written,
[which] daily were fashioned,
when as yet there was none of them.
Even for me how [o] precious were thy thoughts, O Mighty One:
how [p] great is the sum of them!
[If] I would count them, they are more than the sand:
I have [q] awaked and am still with thee.

j cf. Ps. 16. 7. ctr. Jer. 12. 2.
k cf. Ps. 22. 10.
l vers. 15, 16. Eccl. 11. 5.
m cf. Job 10. 8, 9. cf. Job 3. 10. cf. Jer. 20. 17.
n cf. Matt. 10. 30.
o cf. Jer. 1. 5. cf. Eph. 1. 4.
p cf. Ps. 40. 5. cf. Is. 55. 8. cf. Job 9. 10. Ps. 71. 15.
q cf. Jno. 21. 25.
q cf. Jer. 31. 26.

psalmist of that compassing about of man on God's part, which at the same time shows fully the divine interest in him, and thus is the revelation to him of God, so as to bring him to fullness of delight in all His thoughts. As Christians we should not take up the mystery of our formation in the womb to assure ourselves of this; and that he does so shows us sufficiently the difference of the Old Testament standpoint. Christians are naturally, therefore, disposed to find in all this the typical presentation of Christian truths. But however this may do as application, the literal meaning must come first, and be the foundation of all other. It is true that this speaks to us only of the Creator, and leaves the question of sin unbottomed. Yet a soul that has realized redemption can and will come back to God's creative thoughts, with fresh apprehension of the truth that He cannot "forsake the work of His own hands." And the question of sin being here left out, at least makes the whole matter proportionately simple.

"For Thou hast *acquired* my reins" is the keynote of what follows. "The reins" stand for the very innermost parts; and, according to the Old Testament, the deepest recesses of the mind: there where the fundamental moral questions are entertained and find solution,—the good is received and the evil rejected.* God is the Master here; Lord of the conscience, which continually reminds us of Him and summons before His judgment-seat; and He has *acquired* this right over us by the fact to which the psalmist now goes on, that He is our Maker: "Thou hast acquired my reins: Thou coveredst"—or, perhaps, "didst interweave me in my mother's womb." Marvelous power it was that was at work there, and not idly, but with purpose and plan. "I will praise Thee, for I am fearfully, wonderfully made: marvelous are Thy works, and that my soul knoweth well."

He proceeds to speak of these marvels: of the bony framework upon which the flesh was supported; of the delicate embroidery of vessels and nerves ramifying through it; all this wrought in secret, in "underparts of earth,"—not the ground, surely, which would scarcely have been true of Adam,—but of that human substance which is but animated dust. He thinks of that wrapped up embryo, and of the sketched out plan, in which each part of that continually progressing organism had, before coming into being, its predestined place.

Surely for us, who know much more of these things than the psalmist, the wonder of them should not be less. To him they were a revelation of God's

* The reins or kidneys, as excretory organs, naturally speak of this; and of such symbolism—as far as possible from materialism—the Old Testament is full.

4 (19-24): The failed creature.
a (19, 20) in his rebellion. (i.) of one accord with God. (ii.) enemies to Thee.
b (21, 22): fellowship against evil. (i.) divine concord. (ii.) Thine enemies mine.
c (23, 24): Sanctuary refuge. (i) the light welcomed. (ii.) for discernment of evil.

Wilt thou not [r]slay the wicked, O God? *
ye men of blood, [s]depart from me!
[Men] who speak of thee [t]mischievously,
they lift themselves up in vain as enemies to thee.
Do not I [u]hate those that hate thee, Jehovah?
and do not I loathe those that rise up against thee?
I hate them with [v]perfect hatred:
they are as if enemies to [w]myself.
[z]Search me, O Mighty One, and know my heart,
[y]prove me, and know my diverse thoughts:
And see if there be any [z]grievous way in me,
and [a]lead me in the way everlasting.

r *cf.* Is. 11.4. *cf.* 2 Thess. 1. 9, 10.
s Ps. 6. 8. Ps. 119.115.
t Jude 15. *cf.* Mal. 3. 13.
u Ps.119.158.
v Am. 5. 15.
w *ctr.*2 Chr. 19. 2.
x *cf.* ver. 1. Ps. 26. 2.
y *cf.*Ps.17.3. *cf.* 1 Cor.11. 28.
z *cf.* Ps.16.4. *cf.*Prov.13. 15.
a Ps. 27. 11. *cf.*Jer.6.16.

*Eloah.

thoughts toward him,—precious thoughts of divine wisdom and love, which when looked at in the sum, the final outcome of it all, it was great indeed; but if you took them up to look at them in detail, they were numberless as the grains of sand. And still, to the man wakened up out of the unconsciousness of his beginning, as he has been rehearsing it, this same God abides. Could he desire to have Him banished?

4. How awful, then, the condition of the wicked: strangers and enemies to Him who made them; necessarily devoted to death by the very Author of their life. The psalmist is in perfect accord with the divine sentence, and counts the enemies of God as enemies to himself. But he is not unconscious of his own malady; and the sanctity of God's presence is not a refuge merely for him from the wickedness around. He seeks it as a refuge from himself also, and welcomes the light of it, as where sin cannot be hid. "Search me," he cries, "O Mighty One, and know my heart; try me, and know my diverse"—literally, "branching"—"thoughts": all those to him perplexing entanglements of thought which God alone could unravel; "and see if there be any grievous way in me,"—anything which is grievous to Thee: "and lead me in the way everlasting."

This is "truth in the inward parts" attained then; and God is become the one help and refuge of the soul: first of all, where we must surely begin, for itself. The setting aside of man must begin here in order to be truthful. But it does not *end* here, as manifestly the need of redemption is not yet recognized, and the world is not seen either in its true character. The experience of this section has room yet to deepen and widen in those that are to come.

Sec. 2.

The second section shows us therefore all other props for the soul displaced, that God may be its one resource. As we have seen in the "songs of ascents," and may see probably in every ternary series, the last psalm shows us (and indeed according to the symbolism of the number) the purport of the section. Here, in the 142nd psalm, all refuge fails but God alone. Turning back from this to the first psalm then (the 140th) we can realize that the point of it is the sufficiency of such a refuge. In the connecting psalm between these, the psalmist proclaims that his refuge is in God, and separates himself from the wicked, who will receive God's judgment. Thus the general purport seems clear enough.

PSALM CXL.

The 140th psalm is evidently in another line of thought altogether from that which precedes it. We are again in the midst of men—of the strife going on in the world; and indeed in the trial of the latter days. Compassed with evil, the righteous are driven the more to God as their resource, and encourage themselves in that holiness of His, which must of necessity display itself against the

SECTION 2. (Ps. cxl.-cxlii.)
The setting aside of human help.

Ps. cxl.

[1]PSALM CXL.

Jehovah the sole sufficiency.

To the chief musician, a psalm of David.

1 (1-3): The plea of righteousness. (i.) Jehovah my sufficiency. (ii.) from men of strife. (iii.) manifested.

DELIVER me, Jehovah, from the [b]evil man:
preserve me from the violent man.
Who devise [c]mischiefs in [their] heart:
every day they gather together for war.
They sharpen their [d]tongues like a serpent:
the poison of adders is under their lips. Selah.

2 (4-7): Deliver me. (i.) in righteousness. (ii.) snares. (iii.) the Refuge. (iv.) the experience.

Keep me, Jehovah, from the hands of the wicked:
preserve me from the violent man;
who devise to [e]overthrow my steps.
The proud have hidden a [f]trap for me, and cords:
they have spread a net by the way-side:
they have set snares for me. Selah.
I have [g]said unto Jehovah, *Thou* art my Mighty One:
hear the voice of my supplications, Jehovah.
Jehovah, Lord, the [h]strength of my salvation,
thou hast covered my head in the day of equipment.

3 (8-10): Holiness in view of evil. (i.) grant not, because of pride.

Grant not, Jehovah, the desires of the wicked:
further not his device [lest] they [i]exalt themselves.
Selah.

b ver. 4. Ps. 64. 2.
c Ps. 56. 6. Ps. 35. 20.
d Ps. 64. 3,4. Ps. 58. 4. *ctr.* Song 4. 11.
e *cf.* Ps. 17. 4, 5.
f Ps. 35. 7. Ps. 141. 9.
g *cf.* Ps. 16. 2.
h *cf.* Ps. 18. 2. *cf.* Eph. 6. 10-18.
i *cf.* Deut. 32. 27.

wickedness of their adversaries. It is a very simple psalm in its character, with very little to distinguish it from many others in the book; yet it is needed in its place here,—place having so much to do with the significance of the individual psalms, as we see all through: a principle which applies all through the Word, to every portion of it, and every truth in it. If we would but study the Word with this in view, how God's jewels would shine out in the settings which He has given them; and in how much less danger we should be of getting truth misplaced.

The thirteen verses of the psalm are arranged, as seems usual with this number, in the 4x3 manner of the number 12; but with the additional verse producing an irregularity which here increases the second section to four. This fourth verse is the only one which speaks of positive *present* experience in the psalm.

1. We have first the plea of righteousness urged by the psalmist in his own behalf, as shown by the insistence all through upon the evil character of the men he fears. He appeals to God to preserve him from the evil and violent man, the men of strife and plotters of mischief; the poison of their tongues manifesting them as the brood of the serpent, the instruments of the malignant power of Satan upon the earth. This evil of the tongue comes up again more than once in the psalm, as well as prominently in many others, and is specially characteristic of the last days, with their development of Antichrist and his "strong delusion." The attack upon the people of God goes naturally along with this.

2. Again the psalmist prays, in almost the same words, for God's deliverance; specifying, however, more particularly now, the devices for his overthrow, the snares hidden in his path. And from this he turns to affirm more emphatically the Mighty One to be his refuge, comforted by the actual experience of how "Jehovah, the Lord, the strength of his salvation," had covered his head in the day of his *equipment:* that is, with what a helmet God provided him.

3. He brings in now the holiness of God as against the evil. He prays that God will not grant the desire of the wicked, lest it stimulate their pride; but may He give them rather the work of their own lips, the mischief they had been

(ii.) but grant the work of their own lips. (iii.) divine wrath manifest.

[As for] the head of those that compass me,
let the travail of their *j* own lips cover them.
Let burning *k* coals fall on them:
let them be cast into the fire;
into deep places, that they rise not *l* again.

j Prov. 12. 13.
k Ps. 11. 6. Ps. 120. 4.
l *cf.* Ps. 18. 37, 38.

4 (11–13): The test of experience. (i.) the evil shall find evil. (ii.) the lowly be sustained.

The man of [evil] tongue shall not be *m* established in the earth:
evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow [him].
I know that Jehovah will *n* maintain the cause of the poor—
the right of the needy.

m *cf.* Ps. 37. 9–11.
n Ps. 9. 3, 4.

(iii.) the righteous praise and dwell with Thee.

Surely the *o* righteous shall give thanks to thy name:
the upright shall dwell in thy presence.

o Ps. 32. 11. Ps. 33. 1.

[2] PSALM CXLI.

Ps. cxli.

Separation from the workers of iniquity.

A psalm of David.

1 (1–6): On the part of the faithful. (i.) the plea of the solitary. (ii.) accept my prayer.

JEHOVAH, I call unto thee, *p* hasten unto me:
give ear unto my voice, when I call unto thee.
Let my prayer be set forth [as] *q* incense before thee,
the lifting of my palms be [as] an evening-offering.

p Ps. 70. 1, 5.
q *cf.* Ex. 30. 8. *cf.* Dan. 9. 21. *cf.* Rev. 5. 8. *cf.* Rev. 8. 3.

laboriously working at. Let the divine anger manifest itself against them, more and more; which is necessarily the case with those that turn not from the ways that bring it down: burning coals falling are not yet the being *cast into* the fire; and the deep places from which they rise no more add to it the element of complete hopelessness.

4. The last section appeals to experience, although, I suppose, the experience of the future, to confirm confidence as to Jehovah's ways with saint and sinner. The day of open manifestation is at hand, and the place of the wicked upon the earth shall not be found. The rod of iron will repress at last all open wickedness; and the evil tongue—"the man given to tongue"—along with the evil deed. Words are in fact often deeds, if sometimes we have to put them in opposition to one another.

On the other hand, care for the poor and needy will emphatically characterize the day of the Lord's rule, as we have fully seen (compare especially Ps. lxxii.) There will be also the manifest glory, as of old, but with transcendent lustre, bathing the restored city in its radiance. That "the upright shall dwell in Thy Presence," the whole earth shall witness.

PSALM CXLI.

The second psalm of the series shows us, as already said, the separation of the righteous from the wicked; which is first the act of the righteous himself, and then carried out by the judgment of God. These are, in fact, the two divisions of the psalm. As to the interpretation there are some peculiar difficulties which all expositors have recognized, even the text of the old versions having been apparently affected by them. But the clearness of the general purport is scarcely touched by this.

1. The heart of the solitary, amid the pressure of evil round him, cries out for God. His plea is the very prayer which he is making, which cannot but find response from the prayer-hearing One. May it go up to Him, he asks, as incense, and the lifting up his palms be as an evening-offering.

Then the consciousness of the holiness of the Presence he is seeking makes him think of the mouth with which he is addressing God, and of his own infirmity; and he prays Jehovah to set a guard before it, and to keep the door of his

(iii.) the guard of holiness.

Set a [r]guard, Jehovah, before my mouth:
keep the door of my lips.

(iv.) no yielding to evil practice.

Incline not my [s]heart to any evil thing,
to practise wicked works with men that are workers of vanity;
and let me not eat of their [t]dainties.

(v.) an exercised heart.

Let the righteous [u]smite me, it shall be kindness,
and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, that my head shall not refuse:
for still also my prayer shall be [v]against their evil-doings.*

2 (6-10): Separation by judgment.

(i.) the divine act.

Their [w]judges shall be hurled against the sides of the cliff;
and they shall [x]hear my words, that they are sweet.

(ii.) the national death (?)

As when one ploweth and cleaveth the earth,
our [y]bones are scattered at the mouth of Sheol.

(iii.) the refuge of the soul.

But unto thee, Jehovah, Lord, are [z]mine eyes:
in thee I have taken refuge; leave not my soul destitute.

*Or "in their calamities."

r *cf.* Eph. 4. 29.
s *cf.* Prov. 4. 23.
t *cf.* Ps. 16. 4. Prov. 23. 6. *cf.* Heb. 11. 24–26.
u *cf.* Prov. 27. 6. *cf.* 1 Thess. 5. 12, 13. *cf.* Rev. 3. 19.
v *cf.* Rom. 11. 2. *cf.* Rev. 6. 10.
w *cf.* Nu. 16. 23–35. *cf.* Rev. 19. 20.
x *cf.* Is. 26. 9–11. *cf.* Ps. 58. 11.
y *cf.* Ps. 44. 11. *ctr.* Ps. 53. 5.
z Ps. 123. 1, 2.

lips, that nothing unseemly may come forth. From outside also may no evil thing be permitted to allure him to evil practices with workers of vanity, nor to partake of their dainties—the "pleasant things" which can still appeal, alas, to the old nature, even of the child of God.

He prefers the very smitings of the righteous, and accepts it as kindness; and their reproof shall be as oil to gladden him (Ps. xlv. 7), which his head will not refuse. The rest of the verse is not so easy to connect with this, while it may be rendered in two different ways. If we render "for still also my prayer shall be in their calamities," this can hardly refer to the (hypothetical) righteous ones just spoken of. It would seem but a small thing to say that he would not cease to pray for those whom he counts as doing him but a kindness, and who *as* righteous would be supposed to have meant it to be such. If we refer it to the calamities of the evil-doers, this seems difficult to connect, and scarcely in the spirit of a psalm like this, which calls rather for judgment. It seems, therefore, as if we should rather render, as I have done, "against their evil-doings." In this case, also, we must go back to the preceding verse to find the reference. He must be speaking of the wicked, to whose wickedness he opposes his prayer; and that is the very thing which, as far as he is concerned, instead of practising them, he has been doing. He simply says now that this will be also his course in future; and this is in full harmony with the acceptance of the reproof of the righteous, which he has just professed. All this shows an exercised heart before God, and completes the picture of the faithful man in his separation of himself from the workers of iniquity, which the first section of the psalm presents.

2. We have now the divine separation between the two, and that by judgment. "Their judges shall be hurled against the sides of the cliff; and they shall hear my words that they are sweet." There is again an abruptness which produces difficulty; but one would naturally say that here God's act was separating between two classes of the evil-doers themselves, their judges being the leaders who were perverting the people, and whose destruction would lead the rest, or many of them, to listen to the testimony of those from whom they had previously turned away. This would be in keeping with the character of the psalm. But an abrupt change is found again in the next verse, where, as it stands in the Hebrew, the condition of the nation or of the persecuted remnant must be referred to. It is no wonder that some of the ancient versions should have "*their* bones are

(iv.) from the workers of vanity.
(v.) the governmental end.

Keep me from the [a]snare that they have laid for me,
and from the traps of the workers of vanity.
Let the wicked fall into their [b]own nets;
while *I* pass by.

[a] Ps. 140. 5.
[b] Ps. 7. 15, 16. Ps. 35. 8.

Ps. cxlii.

[3]PSALM CXLII.

Jehovah the refuge and portion.

Maskil of David: a prayer when he was in the [c]cave.

[c] Ps. 57, title. 1 Sa. 22. 1. 1 Sa. 24. 3.

(i.) an appeal to Jehovah.

I CRY unto Jehovah with my [d]voice:
with my voice I supplicate Jehovah.

[d] Ps. 3. 4.

(ii.) the declaration.

I [e]pour out my complaint before him:
before him I declare my strait.

[e] *cf.* Ps. 102, title. *cf.* Lam. 2. 19.

(iii.) manifest to Him.

When my spirit was [f]overwhelmed within me,
then *thou* knewest my path:
in the way wherein I walked have they hidden a snare for me.

[f] Ps. 143. 4. Ps. 42. 4, 5. *cf.* Job 23. 10.

(iv.) the failure of man.

Look on the right hand, and see,
there is none that knoweth me:
[g]refuge hath failed me;
there is none that careth for my soul.

[g] *cf.* Ps. 69. 20.

scattered at the mouth of Sheol," but it would not be safe to follow a correction so easily inferred and so slenderly supported. We must take it then as a figure, such as in Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones, a picture of life apparently gone, and hope with life, save as faith could count upon the God of resurrection. And so the soul of the righteous turns to Jehovah as its refuge in this extremity, and prays for deliverance from the snare of the wicked. While righteous retribution takes its course with these, may he pass by uninjured.

PSALM CXLII.

In the third psalm here, we have the last Maskil, or psalm of instruction,—a worthy close to the series; for it leaves us with God as the only refuge and rest of the soul, man having failed, not only in power but in heart to help. The psalm is a very short and simple one; wholly a prayer, but closing with confident assurance.

At once the psalmist emphatically states that it is *to Jehovah* that he cries: before Him he declares his strait, as if there were no other. He can appeal with confidence to One who has known all about him, and in circumstances of deepest distress: his spirit overwhelmed, the enemy's snare hidden for him in the path in which (as is implied) he had walked before Him (compare Ps. i. 6).

Among men he found no helper, none who would own acquaintance with him. Refuge was cut off unless he found it in Jehovah: none beside cared at all. A terrible place to be in, if Jehovah were not His hiding-place! but if He were not, though all arms were stretched out to succor him, how vain would it all be! God—how easily in our insane folly we think to do without Him, who is the one necessity for all His creatures. But such discoveries constitute the grand moments for the soul, when it turns to God as now to be its all: "I cried unto Thee, Jehovah; I said,—Thou art my refuge, my portion, in the land of the living."

Two things which go together, and refuse absolutely to be separated from one another: for He cannot suffice us in the one way, except He suffices us in the other: these are but two aspects of one need into which we are fallen, as fallen away from Him,—shelterless, famine-stricken, because away from the Father's house. To get back there is to find the one need met as surely as the other.

And "in the land of the living"! For death itself invades not the Father's house: "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." And even the way

(v.) the soul with God.

I cried unto thee, Jehovah; I said,—
[h]Thou art my refuge,—
my portion, in the land of the living.

(vi.) the overcoming His.

Attend unto my cry, for I am brought very [i]low:
deliver me from my persecutors, for they are
[j]stronger than I.

(vii.) rest in assurance.

Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks
unto thy name:
the righteous shall surround me, for thou wilt deal
[k]bountifully with me.

[h] Ps. 62. 7,8.
[i] Ps. 116. 6.
[j] *cf.* Ps. 35. 10.
[k] Ps. 13. 6. Ps. 116. 7.

SECTION 3. (Ps. cxliii.-cxlv.)

Raised up out of the depth.

Ps. cxliii.

[l]PSALM CXLIII.

The plea of righteousness where Jehovah alone is righteous.

A psalm of David.

1 (1, 2): The plea.

(i.) in righteousness and faithfulness.

(ii.) enter not into judgment.

JEHOVAH, hear my prayer:
[l]give ear to my supplications.
in thy faithfulness answer me;
in thy righteousness.
And [m]enter not into judgment with thy servant:
for before thee shall no living man be justified.

[l] Ps. 17. 6.
[m] Ps. 130. 3. Job 9. 2, 3. *cf.* Rom. 3. 19, 20.

with Him is a "way everlasting"; as the life we already live is "everlasting life." The psalmist could not know these things as we; but thus the truth he spoke was only fuller than he knew.

Thus then he cries to God the one Helper, out of the depth, brought low by enemies too strong for him, to whom he is left unless God come in. *He* must be the Overcomer for him; and thus shut up, though a prisoner of hope, he looks to Him with an expectation brightening into perfect assurance. He sees himself amid a company also of righteous gathered with him by the same grace as himself, to give thanks to the glorious Name of his bountiful Redeemer.

Sec. 3.

We are now hastening to the end. In the final psalm of this section, we have only praise; the second anticipates the judgment of their enemies at hand; the first puts them upon sure ground in which they can appeal to the righteousness of God on their own behalf. This is, of course, not just as the epistle to the Romans has developed it for us in the gospel; nor is atonement brought in at all in this place. We do approach the apostle, however, negatively, in the confession that none among men can be justified before God in judgment. And the righteousness to which they can appeal therefore, is Jehovah's faithfulness to His covenant and to His Name.

The Name Jehovah was that which He attached to the covenant according to which He delivered His people out of Egypt; and though they chose at Sinai another and a legal one, yet we have seen many times in these psalms how the Spirit of God leads them continually back to that first deliverance. If the people have given up the grace in which He first appeared for them, the Name, the Unchangeable, is the guarantee that His thoughts shall abide; and though for a time they may seem to be set aside by man's self-righteousness, He has made the law itself but the handmaid of the gospel: so far is He from having given it up. Let faith take it up at any time, it shall find it abides; and when Israel take it up, they will find it abiding for them, and the faithfulness and righteousness of God pledged to them in it.

And from hence to the full deliverance and the praise will not be long. From the realization of the impossibility of self-justification before God to justification

2 (3-6): The opposition from the enemy. (i.) his tyranny.
For the enemy hath persecuted my soul:
he hath [n] crushed my life to the ground: [n] Ps. 56. 1,2.
he hath made me dwell in darkness,
as those that have long been dead.
(ii.) desolate!
And my spirit is [o] overwhelmed within me: [o] Ps. 142. 3. cf. Ps. 77. 3.
my heart within me is desolate.
(iii.) the remembrance of God.
I [p] remember the days of old: [p] cf. Ps. 77. 5-11.
I meditate on all thy doing;
I muse on the work of thy hands.
(iv.) languishing for Him.
I [q] stretch out my hands unto thee: [q] cf. Job 11. 13. Ps. 88. 9.
my soul is as a thirsty* land for thee. Selah.

3 (7-10): Taking refuge. (i.) Jehovah alone his hope.
Answer me [r] speedily, Jehovah: [r] Ps. 141. 1.
my spirit faileth;
hide not thy face from me,
or I shall be [s] like them that go down to the pit. [s] Ps. 28. 1. Ps. 88. 4.
(ii.) the plea of faith.
Make me to hear thy loving-kindness in the [t] morning, [t] cf. 2 Sam. 23. 4. cf. Ps. 110. 3.
for in thee do I trust:
make me to [u] know the way in which I should walk, [u] Ps. 25. 4,5.
for I lift up my soul unto thee.
(iii.) my refuge.
Deliver me from mine enemies, Jehovah:
I [v] hide myself in thee.† [v] Ps. 57. 1.
(iv.) for practical life.
Teach me to [w] do thy will, for thou art my God: [w] cf. Jno. 7. 17.
thy spirit is good;
lead me into the [x] land of uprightness. [x] cf. Is. 26. 10 with Ps. 125. 3.

* faint, or languishing. † literally, "unto thee."

on God's part, is not even a step; for this is His own act, and He is for us, just as we are, the Justifier of him who worketh not but believeth.

Psalm CXLIII.

This then is the principle of the first psalm here. It is the plea of righteousness in the mouth of faith, which owns that none is righteous except God alone, and which dares to say, in the consciousness of such ill desert, "in Thy faithfulness answer me; in Thy righteousness." This the Cross makes simple for us now. The Old Testament saint could not of course see this, save dimly through the sacrificial shadows: Israel will see it when they look upon the face of Him whom they have pierced.

1. It is still prayer that we have here, until the closing verses. "Jehovah, hear my prayer; give ear unto my supplications: in Thy faithfulness answer me—in Thy righteousness!" And then follows the confession: "And enter not into judgment with Thy servant: for before Thee shall no living man be justified."

2. We have then the plow that God has used with them to bring them into the exercises which in the end will be so fruitful. As in the hundred and forty-first psalm we heard them crying as from the mouth of Sheol, so here the psalmist speaks as one among the dwellers in darkness—even those long dead. But he is not indifferent, but his spirit overwhelmed, and his heart desolate; though he carries with him the remembrance of days of old, when God had manifestly wrought, and for Him his soul cried out as a thirsty land for rain.

3. Here then he takes refuge. There is for him no other hope. Did Jehovah hide His face, he would be like one of those going down to the pit. But as one who trusted in Him, he prayed to see early His loving-kindness, and to learn the way also in which to walk. In Jehovah he hid himself, and sought to be taught the will of Him who was his God. The spirit of faith and of obedience always go together.

4 (11, 12): The experience looked for. (i.) of righteousness. (ii.) of deliverance from enemies.

For thy name's sake, Jehovah, [y] thou wilt quicken me:
in thy righteousness thou wilt bring my soul out of strait.
In thy loving-kindness also thou wilt [z] cut off mine enemies,
and destroy all the adversaries of my soul:
for I am thy [a] servant.

y Ps. 119. 107. cf. Ps. 71. 20.
z Ps. 34. 16.
a Ps. 116. 16. Ps. 119. 125.

Ps. cxliv.

[2] PSALM CXLIV.

The Helper of Israel.

[A psalm] of David.

1 (1-4): The only Mighty One. (i.) Jehovah my rock, (ii.) my Deliverer.

BLESSED be Jehovah my [b] rock,
who teacheth my hands to [c] war,
my fingers to fight.
My [d] loving-kindness and my fortress,
my high tower and my deliverer,
my shield, and in whom I take refuge:
who subdueth the peoples * under me.

b Ps. 18. 2, 31. Deut. 32. 4. Is. 26. 4.
c 2 Sam. 22. 35.
d Ps. 107. 1. cf. Mi. 7. 18. cf. Ps. 18. 2, 37, 43.

(iii.) what is man?

Jehovah, [e] what is man that thou takest knowledge of him?
the son of frail man, that thou makest account of him?

e Ps. 8. 4. cf. Job 7. 7, 17.

(iv.) a passing shadow.

Man is like a [f] breath:
his days are like a passing shadow.

f Job 14. 2. Ps. 39. 5. Jas. 4. 14.

2 (5-10:) Deliverance sought. (i.) act in power. (ii.) destroy them.

Bow thy heavens, Jehovah, and [g] come down!
touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.
Cast forth lightning, and [h] scatter them:
send out thine arrows, and discomfit them.

g Ps. 18. 9. Is. 64. 1, 2.
h Ps. 18. 13, 14. cf. Is. 30. 30.

* "*Ammim* is the reading of ninety-one Hebrew MSS., the Chaldee, Syriac, Arabic and Roman Vulgate and of the parallel passages, Ps. xviii. 47; 2 Sam. xxii. 48." (*Coleman.*)

4. In the last two verses we have the experience anticipated of Jehovah's intervention. He will act in righteousness—in consistency with His nature and His Name: thus revival and deliverance are confidently looked for. All Israel's enemies will be destroyed, the nation being owned as Jehovah's servant in a sense which never could have been before.

PSALM. CXLIV.

"God only" is still the moral of the psalm that follows. He is owned here as the sole Helper of Israel, in language much of which recalls to mind the eighteenth, but with five verses added which give the blessing of Israel now with God, and prepare the way for the praises of that which follows, and which ends the series. Man as before is put in the balance before God, and what is he? The answer is a very different one from that given in the eighth psalm, the stand-point being altogether different.

1. Israel is yet in conflict, but strong in God, and confident of the issue. Jehovah is their Rock; and teaches their hands to war and their fingers to fight. He is the real Deliverer in whom they take refuge, and who subdues the peoples under them. Before Jehovah what is man, that He should make account of him? This is, of course, looking at him as the would-be thwarter of God's purposes. Yet he is merely like a breath; his days are like a passing shadow.

2. God is besought, therefore, to come down and destroy their enemies, sending from heaven to deliver them from the hand of strangers, men speaking vanity and acting falsehood. Then would they sing a new song to Him, the

(iii.) from heaven rescue me.
Put forth thy hand from above:
[i]rescue me, and deliver me out of great waters,—
from the hand of aliens. [i] Ps. 18. 16.

(iv.) from vain men.
Whose mouth speaketh vanity,
and their hand is a right hand of [j]falsehood. [j] ver. 11. Ps. 12. 2. cf. Is.44.20.

(v.) result.
O God, I will sing a [k]new song unto thee:
with a ten-stringed psaltery I will psalm unto thee. [k] Ps. 33. 2,3. Ps. 96. 1.

(vi.) God the Giver of victory.
It is he who giveth salvation unto kings:
who [l]rescueth David his servant from the hurtful sword. [l] Ps.18.17,50.

3 (11–15): Full portion possessed.
(i.) beginning with righteous intervention in power.
Rescue me and deliver me from the hand of aliens,
whose [m]mouth speaketh vanity,
and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood. [m] ver. 8.

(ii.) the growth of children.
That our [n]sons may be as plants raised up in their youth,
our daughters as corner-columns, sculptured after the fashion of a palace. [n] Ps. 128. 3.

(iii.) plenty.
Our [o]granaries full, yielding all kinds of store;
our sheep bringing forth thousands and myriads in our pastures. [o] cf. Deut. 28. 4, 5.

(iv.) no failure or distress.
Our kine laden [with young];
no [p]breach nor issuing forth,
and no outcry in our streets. [p] Mi. 4. 4. Is. 32. 18.

(v.) a people with God.
Happy is the people that is in such case!
[q]happy is the people whose God is Jehovah! [q] Deut. 33. 29.

giver of victory to kings (and not their own might), and rescuing David His servant from the hurtful sword. If this speak typically of any in the latter day, it is suggested by another that "it would be 'the prince' [of Ezekiel xliv.–xlvi.]; for there will be a house of David on the earth" at that time (Zech. xiii). Messiah is of course the true Head; but the language seems more naturally to refer to a merely human ruler.

3. The psalm ends with describing the portion of Israel as the people of Jehovah, beginning with Jehovah's intervention in power for them: righteously, because of the character of their enemies. This would bring them into the fullness of earthly blessing according to announcements of the law, but of which the law was incompetent to give them possession. "Happy the people in such a case—a people whose God is Jehovah."

Psalm CXLV.

The concluding psalm of this series is emphatically "David's praise." From its position, and knowing of whom David is the familiar type, we should naturally be led to think of Messiah in it as leading the praises of men,—praising, as He declares He will, in the great congregation (Ps. xxii. 25). Whose voice but His could fittingly take this place? And accordingly in the psalm itself we find the Speaker distinguishing Himself from the general voice of praise, which, beginning with the "godly" in Israel, extends to the "sons of men" at large (vers. 10, 12). For all eternity this distinction lasts (ver. 21). But what praise will be waked up by this Voice when, free at last from all hindrances on man's part, it shall be heard as it will!

The psalm is the last of the alphabetic psalms, the meaning of which has been again and again pointed out. Everything has come into place and order now, and all man's language is restored from its Babel strife of tongues to unity of mind and purpose. Strange it seems, however, that one letter (*Nun*) is wanting, and the structure of the psalm acknowledges the deficiency: for, while we might

Ps. cxlv.

[3]PSALM CXLV.

Messiah's praises.

David's praise.

1 (1-7): Divine power. (i.) constant praise to the King. (ii.) confirmed. (iii.) the reality. (iv.) from the generations of men.

(*Aleph*) I WILL [r]extol thee, my God, O King:
and will bless thy name for ever and aye. — r Ps. 47. 6,7.

(*Beth*) Every day will I bless thee:
and will praise thy name for [s]ever and aye. — s Ps. 146. 10.

(*Gimel*) Great is Jehovah and [t]greatly to be praised;
and his greatness is unsearchable. — t Ps. 48. 1. Ps. 96. 4.

(*Daleth*) Generation to generation shall [u]celebrate thy works,
and shall declare thy mighty deeds. — u Is. 38. 19.

(v.) acts toward His own.

(*He*) I will speak of the glorious [v]splendor of thy majesty;
and of thy wondrous works. — v Is. 24. 14.

(vi.) the repression of evil.

(*Vau*) And they shall tell of the might of thy [w]terrible acts,
and I will declare thy greatness. — w Ps. 46. 8. Ex. 15. 15.

(vii.)

(*Zayin*) The memory of thy great [x]goodness shall they pour forth,
and sing aloud of thy righteousness. — x Ps. 33. 5.

2 (8-13): Divine loving-kindness. (i.) harmonious.

(*Cheth*) Gracious and [y]compassionate is Jehovah;
slow to anger and of great loving-kindness. — y Ps. 103. 8,9.

naturally suppose that the twenty-one verses resulting would divide now into three sevens, and thus the stamp of perfection after all be left upon the psalm; in fact it is not so: the structure is 7, 6, 8; the middle section does not reach to 7, though the overpassing of the last one into 8, shows, as the final verse itself does, that the praise here is eternal.

I cannot but conclude that the gap is meant to remind us that in fact the fullness of praise is not complete without other voices which are not found here; and that these missing voices are those of the Church and the heavenly saints in general. Meaning there surely is in it, where everything has meaning. The deficient *Nun* represents the jubilee number 50, which in one of its factors shows us man with God; this lifted to a higher plane by the multiplication with 10; but I leave this to those with whom nothing in Scripture is fortuitous to consider for themselves.

The three sections celebrate; 1. the power of God; 2. His loving-kindness; 3. His character as the Restorer—as we may say, the God of resurrection.

1. The Voice declares its steadfast purpose to extol God the King, and that for eternity. And this it repeats, emphasizing and confirming it: for has not, alas, experience shown how untrustworthy in general have been men's promises and resolutions? But here is One now who will not fail, who did not fail, when that will of God which He came to do expressed itself in the law of sacrifice. Here He has been thoroughly tested; and now, as He speaks, the government is upon His shoulder,—the full charge of that in which the divine character is to be shown forth: it is His in such a manner to glorify God.

He is worthy to be praised: His greatness is an infinite reality. The generations of men, too, shall declare it. But one tongue can speak aright of the glorious splendor of His majesty, and of His mighty works. *They* shall tell of the terrible acts by which evil has been dealt with and repressed. *He* will declare God's greatness. Yet they, too, shall pour forth their memory of His goodness, and sing aloud of His righteousness.

2. The last verse is, as often, a link with the next division, which takes up

(ii.) the Helper.	(*Teth*)	Good is Jehovah to [z]all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.	z Ps. 147.8,9.
(iii.) the return of praise.	(*Jod*)	All thy [a]works praise thee, Jehovah; and thy godly ones bless thee.	a Ps. 86. 8. Ps. 148.
(iv.) the voice of experience.	(*Caph*)	The glory of thy [b]kingdom shall they tell, and speak of thy might:	b ver. 13. Is. 37. 16.
(v.) governmental ways.	(*Lamed*)	To [c]make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom.	c ver. 6.
(vi.) the Overcomer.	(*Mem*)	Thy kingdom is a [d]kingdom of all ages, and thy dominion through all generations.	d Ex. 15. 18. *cf.* Rev. 11. 15.
3 (14-21): The Restorer. (i.) is Jehovah.	(*Samech*)	Jehovah is the upholder of all that [e]fall, and raiseth up all those that are bowed down.	e Ps. 37. 24. Mi. 7. 8.
(ii.) maintaining.	(*Ayin*)	The eyes of all [f]wait upon thee, and thou givest them their food in due season.	f Ps. 104.27.
(iii.) satisfying.	(*Pe*)	Thou [g]openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.	g Ps. 104. 21, 28. Ps. 147. 9.
(iv.) merciful (?)	(*Tsaddi*)	Righteous is Jehovah in [h]all his ways, and loving-kind in all his works.	h Ps. 116. 5.
(v.) the weak with the Strong.	*Koph*)	Nigh is Jehovah to all that [i]call upon him,— to all that call upon him in truth.	i Lam. 3.53. *cf.* Jas. 4. 8.
(vi.) limiting the evil.	(*Resh*)	The desire of those who fear him he [j]fulfilleth; he heareth their cry also, and saveth them.	j Ps. 37. 4. Ps. 34. 9.
(vii.) perfect.	(*Schin*)	Jehovah preserveth all that love him: but all the [k]wicked he will destroy.	k Ps. 31. 23. Ps. 11. 6.
(viii.) the eternal praise.	(*Tau*)	My mouth shall speak Jehovah's praise; and let all flesh [l]bless his holy name for ever and aye.	l Ps. 103. 22.

the loving-kindness of Jehovah. Gracious and compassionate is He,—slow to be moved to anything that seems other than this; the Helper of all, His tender mercies are over all His works. Thus all His works praise Him, and the hearts of His people respond to Him in praise: they tell of the glory of His kingdom and His might, making known to the sons of men at large His acts and the majesty of His kingdom. Israel, in fact, will do this: for they, in their marvelous history, will be the suited witnesses of His ways to all the earth.

His kingdom is thus proved to be a kingdom of all ages. Not the millennial age alone, but those in which the power of evil might seem to have prevailed, and in which Satan has been, in fact, the "prince of this world." God has been, all through, the great Overcomer: and what discoveries of His glory in this way yet await us! We shall see how *He* has prevailed, beyond all our thoughts, in overcoming man's evil with His good.

3. This again introduces the third section, in which we see Him indeed the Overcomer: allowing sin to declare itself and the results to follow, but holding in His hand the power to bring out of them. Thus Jehovah it is, according to the power of that covenant-Name, who is the Upholder of all that fall, and He who raiseth up all that are bowed down. Upon Him wait the eyes of all His creatures, dependent for the food which is to maintain their existence. Thus He provides for the satisfaction and desire of every living thing.

But He is the Moral Governor also of moral beings: righteous and loving-kind. Righteous in all His ways, He can yield also to the necessities and weakness of His creatures. For this He is near to all that call upon Him,—that in truth call on Him. We cannot escape the reminder of the hollowness and insincerity which have so much attached to this. But where there is His fear, there desire is ful-

SUBDIVISION 5. (Ps. cxlvi.–cl.)

A Summary of Praise.

Ps. cxlvi.

1 (1, 2): Jehovah! (i.) a call to praise. (ii.) the assurance of faith. 2 (3–10): His help in contrast with men. (i.) the barrenness of hope in man. (ii.) stamp of death upon him.

[1]PSALM CXLVI.

The Mighty One of Jacob.

[m]HALLELUJAH:
praise Jehovah, O my soul!
I will praise Jehovah [n]while I live:
I will psalm to my God while I have being.

Trust not in [o]princes;
the son of man in whom is no salvation.
His [p]breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth:
in that very day his purposes perish.

m Ps. 148. 1.

n Ps. 63. 4. Ps. 104. 33.

o Ps. 118. 8, 9. Jer. 17. 5.

p Is. 2. 22.

filled; though here, too, the cry is so often out of the evil into which sin has plunged them. But it is under the restraint of His hand, and out of it He saveth. And indeed He preserveth all that love Him, while the wicked meet their necessary doom.

The God of resurrection in all this is but faintly sketched. Not Israel but the Church is the proper witness of this; although, as a principle, it runs through man's history.

The last verse carries the praise on into eternity: Christ still the Leader, and awakening all flesh to bless Jehovah's Name.

SUBD. 5.

Five Hallelujah-psalms complete the book. They show us now Jehovah enthroned amid the praise of His creatures, the heavens being brought in as well as the earth, and upon the earth Israel—ever the people in special relation to Him. It is striking that in all this we do not find any recognition of the past, save in the fact that the Lord gathers the outcasts and heals the broken in heart. These and such-like expressions are found, and we see the judgment of the nations at the hand of Israel (Ps. cxlix); but even redemption is not here celebrated, as far as I can see. It will, of course, always be the basis of all blessing, and that in which the full revelation of the glory of God is found; but for this we must look elsewhere, and in the psalms of atonement find what fully bears witness to it.

Of the five psalms here, the first, with that introductory character which we might expect to find in it, speaks broadly of Jehovah's power as manifested in the help and blessing of those that trust in Him. The second, while extolling Him as the God of creation emphasizes His relationship to delivered Israel. The third calls for the full praise of all in heaven and in earth. The fourth shows the nations yielding, but under the judgment of God, of which Israel are the executors. The last praises Him with all instruments of music, each according to its capacity, the full accompaniment of all Nature in that praise, which man, as its head, leads.

PSALM CXLVI.

The Mighty One of Jacob is here celebrated. Power is the first requisite for all government, and of course for all praise. But alone it could not suffice; and thus it is seen here as power used in ministry to all the need of man,—sustaining power for His feeble creatures, and in behalf of truth and right. The praise here, therefore, is very general.

1. Jehovah, a living God, the "I am": this is He whom all Nature and His saints celebrate. What a joy to recognize over all the multiplicity of Nature, and as the Author of all its laws, a living God upon the throne! And what it implies of us,—how the secret of our condition manifests itself in our holiest things,—that we need to *exhort ourselves* to praise this glorious One! Yet now the soul

(iii.) the real refuge and hope.

(iv.) the God of creation.

(v.) His ways.

(vi.) His restraint of evil.

(vii.) perfect on all sides.

(viii.) reigning eternally.

Happy is he who hath the Mighty One of Jacob for his [q]help:
whose hope is in Jehovah his God;
Who [r]made heaven and earth,
the sea, and all that in them is:
who keepeth truth for ever.
Who executeth judgment for the [s]oppressed,
who giveth bread unto the [t]hungry:
Jehovah looseth the [u]prisoners:
Jehovah openeth [the eyes of] the [v]blind:
Jehovah raiseth those that are [w]bowed down:
Jehovah loveth the [x]righteous:
Jehovah preserveth the [y]strangers:
he upholdeth the [z]fatherless and the widow:
and the way of the [a]wicked he turneth upside down.
Jehovah shall [b]reign for ever:
thy God, O Zion, to all generations.
Hallelujah.

[1]PSALM CXLVII.

In relation to His people.

Ps. cxlvii.

1 (1-6): Jehovah! (i.) a call to praise.

(ii.) in new relationship.

(iii.) restoring.

PRAISE Jah, for it is [c]good:
psalm of our God, for it is pleasant:
praise is [d]comely.
Jehovah is the [e]builder of Jerusalem:
he [f]gathereth the outcasts of Israel.
He healeth the broken in heart,
and [g]bindeth up their wounds.

q Ps.121.1,2.
r Rev. 14. 7.
s Ps. 103. 6. Ps. 9. 9.
t Ps. 107. 9. *cf.* Mark 8. 1-9.
u Ps. 107.10, 14. *cf.* Lk.4.18.
v Is. 35. 5. *cf.* Matt. 9. 27-30.
w Ps.145.14. *cf.*Lk.13.11.
x Ps. 34. 15.
y Deut. 10. 18. *cf.* Lk. 17. 15-19.
z Ps. 68. 5. Jer. 49. 11
a Ps. 147. 6. Ps.9. 16-18.
b Ps. 10. 16. Ps. 29. 10. *cf.* Rev. 19. 6.
c Ps. 92. 1. Ps. 135. 3.
d Ps. 33. 1. *cf.* Lk. 19. 39, 40.
e Ps. 51. 18. Ps. 69. 35. Is. 44. 26.
f Jer. 23. 3. Jer. 31. 10-17. Jer. 32. 37-44. Ezek. 37.20-28.
g Is. 30. 26. *cf.*Is. 57.15-19; *ctr.* Jer. 8. 11; *cf.* Lk. 4. 18.

responds with the energy of its joy in Him: "I will praise Jehovah while I live." Yes, and that only is "life" in which Jehovah is praised.

2. Now He is contrasted with men: how barren and vain is every hope in man, even man at his best. He may mean well, and seem to have power; but he is but breathing earth, and his breath goes and he returns to it: all his purposes, in which your confidence was placed, are buried with him. And in this one recognizes a "Jacob" with whom God must contend: how blessed, then, to know Jacob's Mighty One, who is at the same time Jehovah, and in covenant with man,—his Helper, and not his Lord merely, though his Maker and that of all creation. But He is faithful to the works of His hands, and delights to show his power in goodness, amid all the evil that man has brought in, and in ministering to the need of those dependent upon Him. With His strong hand also upon the evil itself, and in behalf of righteousness. Supporting those bereft of other help, He turns the way of the wicked upside down.

The evil is transitory, and will soon pass: Jehovah—thy God, O Zion—shall reign for ever, to all generations. Hallelujah.

Psalm CXLVII.

The second psalm here, while always recognizing God as the Creator, and pervading Nature with His glorious power, yet comes back again and again to tell rejoicingly what He is to His people Israel, with whom He has dealt as with no other, though His pleasure is always in all who fear Him, and whose trust is in His loving-kindness.

1. Every psalm begins with a call to praise, and Jehovah is still the inspiring Name. "Praise," says the psalmist here, "is pleasant and comely." How can

(iv.) creation as His test.
(v.) the weak with the strong.
(vi.) His mastery of evil.
2 (7-11): The Lover of men.
(i.) the call to praise.
(ii.) the ministry of rain for growth,
(iii.) and satisfaction with food.
(iv.) the vanity of the creature for Him.
(v.) the conditions of being with Him.
3 (12-14): Fencing round Jerusalem.
(i.) Zion called to praise:
(ii.) secure, with her children,
(iii.) prosperous and satisfied.
4 (15-18). The earth subject to Him.
(i.) ruling with prompt obedience.

He telleth the [h]number of the stars:
he giveth to them all their names.
Great is our Lord, and of great [i]power:
his understanding is infinite.
Jehovah [j]lifteth up the meek:
he [k]bringeth down the wicked to the ground.

Respond unto Jehovah with [l]thanksgiving:
psalm unto our God upon the harp:
Who covereth the heavens with clouds;
who [m]prepareth rain for the earth;
who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains;
Giving to the beast his food;
to the young [n]ravens which cry.
He delighteth not in the [o]horse's strength:
he taketh no pleasure in the legs of a man.
Jehovah taketh pleasure in those that [p]fear him:
in those that hope in his loving-kindness.

Celebrate Jehovah, O Jerusalem:
praise thy God, O [q]Zion.
For he hath [r]strengthened the bars of thy gates:
he hath blessed thy children within thee.
He maketh prosperity [in] thy borders:
he satisfieth thee with the [s]fat of wheat.

He sendeth forth his commandment * upon earth:
his word [t]runneth very swiftly.

h Is. 40. 26.
i Job 9. 4. Job. 36. 5. Nah. 1. 3.
j Ps. 146. 8, 9. 1 Sam. 2.8.
k *cf.* Ps. 55. 23. *cf.* Am. 9.2.
l Ps. 95. 2. Is. 51. 3.
m *cf.* Job 38. 25-28. *cf.* Jer.5.24.
n Job 38. 41. *cf.* 1Ki. 17. 4-6.
o Ps. 20. 7. Ps.33.16-18. Prov.21.31.
p Mal. 3. 16, 17. *cf.* Is. 66. 2.
q Ps. 97. 8. Is. 52. 1, 2.
r *cf.* Is.54.11 -17.
s Deut. 32. 14. Ps. 81. 16. *cf.* Hos. 2. 21-23.
t *cf.* Matt. 8. 8-13.

* "saying."

this glorious God be coldly recognized? If you receive but the sun's rays, you must be warmed. And now Israel is rejoicing in the favor of Him from whom she has so long been astray. Jerusalem is built up afresh; its outcasts have been gathered. They have found Him the healer of the broken-hearted, the Physician for their deep and gaping wounds. In all their sad and devious ways, the stars which in that long night have shone above them, have been His witnesses of wisdom and mercy constant, if far off, and of steadfast order all untouched with confusion. For us, too far off for individual recognition, He, as familiar with them, calls them all by name. Now the infinite wisdom of all this shines out: the order of heaven has banished the confusion of earth; the meek, fashioned to this by their down-treading, can now be lifted up; while the wicked He bringeth to the ground.

2. Again the psalmist goes to Nature to illustrate the tender care that is displayed throughout it. The clouds gather, only to prepare rain; heaven is thus in constant ministry to earth, and as the result grass clothes even the mountains. The beast thus receives its food, and the young ravens, which cry in the ears of God. But is this His final aim? Can the horse's strength delight Him? Or even in man, his legs? No: the moral and spiritual rule throughout; and man, who fears Him,—man, hoping in His loving-kindness,—he is the creature in whom His delight is. Here is the song which for us has found expression in a far more wondrous way.

3. Jerusalem now basks in this sunshine, wrapped in the everlasting Arms. Zion has got her impregnable walls and bulwarks, her happy children, within her prosperity and satisfaction. These are but outward manifestations of divine favor: Jehovah has done this; it is the seal of God upon her forehead.

4. And to Him the whole earth is in subjection. His commandment throughout

(ii.) weaving and scattering.
(iii.) solidifying.
(iv.) and melting.

He giveth [u]snow like wool:
he scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes.
He casteth forth his ice like [v]morsels:
who can stand before his cold?
He sendeth out his word and [w]melteth them:
he maketh his wind to blow—the waters flow.

[u] Job 37. 6. Job. 38. 22.
[v] Job 37. 10. Job 38. 29, 30. Ps. 148. 8.
[w] *cf.* Ex. 10. 13, 19.

5 (19, 20): Israel with Him.
(i.) His statutes given her.
(ii.) as to none else.

He declareth his [x]word unto Jacob,
his statutes and his judgments unto Israel.
He hath not done so with [y]any nation:
and as for his judgments, they have not known them.
Hallelujah.

[x] Ps. 78. 5.
[y] Deut. 4. 7, 8, 32-34.

Ps. cxlviii.

[3]PSALM CXLVIII.

The full praise of heaven and earth.

1 (1-6): The higher sphere.
(i.) the heavens called to praise.
(ii.) angelic ministers.
(iii.) revealers.
(iv.) the earth-heavens.

[z]HALLELUJAH!
praise Jehovah from the [a]heavens:
praise him in the heights.
Praise him all his angels:
praise him, all his [b]hosts.
Praise him, [c]sun and moon:
praise him, all ye stars of light.
Praise him, ye heavens of heavens,
and ye [d]waters which are above the heavens.

[z] Ps. 146. 1.
[a] Ps. 103.20, 21.
[b] *cf.* Heb.1.6.
[c] Ps. 19. 1. *cf.* Is.24.23.
[d] Gen. 1. 7.

it is hastened by the swiftest messengers. He gives the snow and scatters the frost; solidifies the water with His cold, and melts it back again with a warmer wind. Nature is plastic in His hand everywhere and owns its God.

5. But Israel has higher laws than those which Nature owns; and these she has learned to realize as her peculiar joy. Transmitter of these to the world around, the nations know them but by her.

PSALM CXLVIII.

1. The full praise of heaven and earth is now invoked, beginning with heaven. There is no hint of the *human* praises which will resound in heaven, except we find it in the blank place left at the commencement, where indeed our place is, and of which the expression "in the heights" may well remind us. God is going to show even to principalities and powers in heavenly places the exceeding riches of His grace and His kindness toward *us* in Christ Jesus, who are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ (Eph. ii. 7; i. 3). How it should affect our souls to realize that in us the value of the work of Christ is to find fullest expression, as those who are, as angels cannot be, members of Christ Himself, and His joint-heirs. What "joy unspeakable and full of glory" must it awaken in every heart taught by the Holy Ghost to enter beforehand into the place prepared for us, and what worship should not our hearts and lives already pour forth, as we think of it.

Then come the glorious ranks of angels, the constant ministers of God's blessed will, the "hosts" that range themselves constantly in their appointed places, in intelligent sympathy with the commands they execute.

Then we descend to sun and moon and stars, the material things which, however, by that very fact enter into the sphere of what is visible to us, and become symbols and witnesses of higher things.

In the fourth place we find, according to most, not a further descent, but the contrary; and in this way the "waters that are above the heavens" are considered to be some immense unknown reservoir of waters which lies beyond the firmament. "The Scriptures, from the first page to the last," says Delitzsch,

(v.) creature with Creator.

(vi.) in their defined place.

2 (7-12): The lower sphere. (i.) the unique and mysterious. (ii.) contraries and conflicting things. (iii.) solidity and organization. (iv.) flesh (?) (v.) responsible man. (vi.) limits in different directions.

3 (13,14): The secret of praise. (i.) Supreme. (ii.) exalting those in relation to Him.

Let them praise Jehovah's name,
for he commanded and they were [e]created.
And he stablished them for aye—for ever:
he hath given [them] a [f]statute which shall not pass.

Praise Jehovah from the [g]earth:
ye monsters and all deeps.
Fire and [h]hail, snow and vapor:
stormy wind [i]fulfilling his word.
Mountains and all [j]hills:
fruitful trees and all cedars.
Beasts and all [k]cattle:
creeping thing, and bird of wing:
Kings of the earth, and all [l]races [of men]:
princes and all judges of the earth:
Both young men and [m]maidens;
old men with youths.

Let them praise Jehovah's [n]name:
for his name alone is exalted:
his [o]majesty is above the earth and heaven.
And he exalteth the horn of his [p]people:—
the praise of all his godly ones:
even of the children of Israel, a people [q]near unto him.
Hallelujah.

e Ps. 33. 6-9. cf. Jno. 1. 3.
f cf. Jer. 33. 25.
g cf. Is. 43. 19, 20.
h Ps. 18. 12, 13. Ps. 147. 16, 17.
i Ps. 107. 25.
j Ps. 98. 8. Is. 55. 12.
k Is. 43. 20. ctr. Joel 1. 18-20.
cf. Is. 60. 6, 7.
l Ps. 72. 9-11.
m cf. Ex. 15. 20, 21. Ps. 68. 11.
n Ps. 135. 1.
o Ps. 8. 1, 2.
p Ps. 89. 17.
q Deut. 4. 7.

"acknowledge the existence of celestial waters, to which the rain-waters stand in the relation, as it were, of a finger-post pointing upwards (Gen. i. 7)." But the "waters above the firmament" of the fourth day are simply those stored up in the clouds, and can be nothing else; and the connection here, with the general descent in the address otherwise, would make one suppose, what the numerical structure would seem to confirm, that only the *earth*-heavens are intended in the verse. The use of the expression "heaven of heavens," however, is a difficulty of which I have no explanation, and the truth may lie in another direction.

The reason for praise is given in the next verses. By Jehovah's word they were created, and they abide before Him in the place His decree has allotted to them, impossible to be traversed or to fail.

2. We have now the lower sphere of earth, in which the call for praise is as universal. Here we begin with what is strangest and least known, the monsters and the deeps (to which, I suppose, they belong). We have next the contrary and conflicting products of the atmosphere: fire, which, as electricity, is associated with hail; snow, which soon becomes vapor; the stormy wind, which, though it may seem in revolt from established order, none the less does perfectly the will of God. The mountains and hills, on the other hand, are types of solidity; while the trees for the first time introduce us to organized things. We have next fleshly life,—higher, and, in proportion, frailer; and then responsible man, and in his various characters of responsibility. Finally, here, too, the defined places in which they are set in relation to one another, and their time-limits on either hand.

3. All these are called to praise; for Jehovah's Name is exalted, and He exalts the people that are brought near to Him. Israel are, upon earth, this special people.

PSALM CXLIX.

"When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." (Isa. xxvi. 9.) But what a tale that tells for man, that the king-

Ps. cxlix.

1 (1, 2): Jehovah, Maker and King. (i.) the call for praise. (ii.) in loving subjection.

2 (3, 4): Saviour. (i.) the call to praise. (ii.) for salvation of the meek.

3 (5-9): The ban upon evil. (i) supremacy of the godly. (ii.) the conflict impending. (iii.) for the fulfillment of holiness. (iv.) the binding. (v.) the judgment of God.

[s]PSALM CXLIX.

The yielding of the nations.

[r]HALLELUJAH!
sing unto Jehovah a [s]new song:
his praise in the congregation of the godly.
Let Israel rejoice in him that [t]made him:
let the children of Zion be glad in their king.

Let them praise his name in the [u]dance,
with timbrel and harp psalm unto him.
For Jehovah taketh [v]pleasure in his people:
he [w]beautifieth the meek with salvation.

Let the godly [x]exult in glory:
let them sing aloud upon their beds.
Let the high praises of the Mighty be in their mouth,*
and a two-edged [y]sword in their hand,
To execute [z]vengeance on the nations,—
punishment on the races [of men],
To bind their [a]kings with chains,
and their nobles with fetters of iron,—
To execute on them the judgment written:
such [b]honor have all his saints. †
Hallelujah.

r Ps. 148.1. Ps. 150. 1.
s Ps. 96. 1. Ps. 98. 1. Is. 42. 10. cf. Rev.5.9. cf.Rev.14.3.
t Ps. 100. 3.
u cf. 2 Sa. 6. 14. Ps. 30. 11.
v Ps. 147. 11.
w Ps. 90. 17. Is. 61. 3.
x Ps. 63.4-6.
y cf. Ps. 37. 34. cf. Josh. 6. 21. cf. Rev. 19. 11-15.
z cf. Is. 63.1-4.
a cf.Josh.12. 9-24.
b cf.1 Cor. 6. 2. cf. Rev. 2. 26, 27.

* "throats." † pious, or godly.

dom of God and of Christ, the one perfect rule for which the earth groans must be introduced after such a manner! Yet it is a "judgment written," as the psalm before us declares. Divine love must needs execute it: the "iron rod" is in the Shepherd's hand, and will smite for the salvation of His people, and to "destroy those that destroy the earth." (Rev. xi. 18.)

This is now what is briefly glanced at, the yielding of the nations to their Creator and King only when their pride is smitten in the dust, and the power they have abused is taken from them. Israel will have their part as instruments in God's hand in that day, as of old when they took possession of their land, the iniquity of the Amorites being at last full. The dew of Hermon (Israel's "great white throne") will revive the mountains of Zion (Ps. cxxxiii. 3); and they will no more, as in the former time, be disobedient to their God.

This must then be the prelude to rest upon earth; the "trumpets of jubilee" sound for the destruction of Jericho; although then, as before, there will be a remnant saved out of it.

1. The call for praise sounds once more: a "new song" is to be upon the lips of Israel. He is to rejoice in Him that made him, and the children of Zion are to be glad in their King. Zion is, as we know, to be the place of His throne, and that throne He is now taking.

2. But they are to praise Him also as their Saviour. He is taking pleasure in His people; and having brought them into the humbled condition necessary for their exaltation, He will beautify the meek with salvation. This is assuredly more than a deliverance from their national foes, though it will include this. And thus they will learn to exult in the Name they have forgotten, and the joy of the Lord will be to them a strength they have never yet possessed. "He that is feeble among them in that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of Jehovah before them." (Zech. xii. 8.)

3. Now they exult in glory; they sing aloud upon their beds. The quiet of their thoughts at the time God has ordained for us to help us to reality shall

Ps. cl.

[5]PSALM CL.

Praise according to full capacity.

(i.) the God of might enthroned.

[c]HALLELUJAH!
praise the Mighty One in his [d]sanctuary:
praise him in the [e]firmament of his power.

(ii.) for His acts.

Praise him for his mighty [f]acts:
praise him according to the abundance of his [g]greatness.

(iii.)

Praise him with the sound of the [h]trumpet:
praise him with [i]psaltery and harp.

(iv.)

Praise him with timbrel and [j]dance:
praise him with [k]stringed instruments and pipe.

(v.)

Praise him with loud [l]cymbals:
praise him with high-sounding cymbals.

(vi.)

Let all that have [m]breath praise Jah:
[n]Hallelujah.

c Ps. 149. 1.
d Ps. 134. 1.
e Ps. 19. 1.
f Ps. 145. 4-6.
g Ps. 48. 1. Deut. 3. 24. 1 Tim. 1. 17.
h 1 Chr. 15. 28. Ps. 98. 6. *ctr.* Rev. 18. 22.
i Ps. 81. 1-3. Ps. 144. 9.
j Ps. 149. 3. *cf.* Jer. 31. 3-14.
k Ps. 4, title. Ps. 92. 3.
l *cf.* 2 Chr. 5. 13, 14.
m Ps. 148. 5-13. Rev. 5. 13. Phil. 2. 10, 11.
n ver. 1. Rev. 19. 1-6; Rev. 22. 3-5.

only make them more ecstatic in their praises. They will have the high praises of the Mighty in their mouth, and in their hand a two-edged sword: for the nations are now to meet the retribution, for long ages of wrong-doing. Their kings, without power to stand, will fall into the hands of these avengers, to be bound and fettered: for it is the judgment written that is now executed, and this is the honor committed to all His saints.

PSALM CL.

Of the last psalm of this series and of the whole book we have unhappily little indeed to say. God is praised, or there is the call to praise Him, as now manifestly enthroned in the earthly as in the heavenly sanctuary; for His acts, all without exception, mighty and of abundant greatness.

Then He is to be praised with all sorts of instruments, according to the full capacity of each. This waking up of inanimate Nature, responsive to the touch or breath of man, is a blessed thing to anticipate. Nature is waiting upon man, and as yet he has evoked little but discord out of it. But this shall all be changed; and then what glorious music shall fill man's abode. But at present we cannot even distinguish the parts of this wondrous concert. Who shall tell us what trumpet and psaltery and harp represent to us here?—what spiritual significance we are to find in them? Most would, perhaps, think even the thought of it to be mere fantasy; and we must, at least, yet wait for the answer. But it will come, and might come soon enough, if—

"more of reverence in us grow"—

and more simplicity of faith in every word of God. Meanwhile let us be sure that everywhere there are notes now of that grand chorus that is to be, which are but out of the reach of ill-attuned ears. Much may be heard that we have not heard; and while the discord, though most real, is that which is first heard, most heeded by the mass, the more we listen the more we shall catch of the deep, sweet notes that lie under. "Seek and ye shall find" is still the Master's word.

"Let every thing that hath breath praise Jehovah!
Halleluiah!"

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

THE WITNESS OF ARITHMETIC TO CHRIST:

A

LEAF FROM THE GOSPEL OF THE EXACT SCIENCES

"Doth not nature itself teach you?" (1 Cor. xi. 14.)
"There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification" (chap. xiv. 10).

THE natural sciences need to be converted to Christ. Nature indeed does *not:* for (apart from man, the crown of it,) it has never fallen from Him. It knew at the beginning the touch of His creating hand, when, as the "Word," the Revealer of the mind of God, He called it into existence; and the work must, of course, bear witness to the Worker. If it be the work of the Revealer, we may well take it as a revelation. And this it is, and as this it must be read, to understand it.

But the sciences, so called, are drifting away from Christ. Man wants no more of God than he ever did; and science being the order of the day, his aim must be to make it such as he would have it. He must use it as Adam his father did the trees of the garden, to put a hedge between himself and Him who is pursuing him. The old story, if it be no more than a tradition, has its features of most uncomfortable resemblance to men's conduct now; all the more uncomfortable because every one now believes in "heredity."

So much the more earnestly does science "offer itself," as a well-known professor has told us, "to purify theology,"—necessarily after its own fashion: to make it as purely natural—as little supernatural—as it is itself. And from hence has come an attack on Christianity, (which is nothing if not supernatural,) an attack which in the multiplicity of forces enlisted under it, and in the pretentiousness of the learning out of which it springs, is the most formidable of its kind which perhaps the centuries have ever witnessed.

There has been, too, already, on the part of those who maintain the defence, so large a yielding of the ground in dispute, as brings into peril of loss all that remains of it. They have allowed the principle—at least

the mass have—that "Scripture was not intended to teach science," to be pushed so far as practically to separate from one another God's two witnesses. The natural has been cut off from the supernatural, and become thus merely secular. We may, perhaps, indeed find God in it, but scarcely the God of revelation: rather a heathen than the Christian God; or God reduced to the features common to the two. The effect of which, for those to whom Christ is the revelation, and the only revelation, of God, is to make natural theology but the dullest, coldest candlelight to those accustomed to the warmth and glory of the noonday sun. Thus it is no wonder if Nature be left as neutral territory, or debateable ground, for the materialistic or agnostic squatter to build upon, with only scant and ineffective protest.

But for Christianity such a division of the empire must be ruin in the end. Christ, if not a universal King, is none. If the physical universe say "I know Him not," where, then, is this kingdom of His? Thus science has gone on, taking fullest advantage of the concession made to it, pushing further and further its limits continually, insisting on full freedom for speculation,—on having room to add to the history of the world its dreams of the beginning, its prophecies of the end, and to fill up all the gaps between after its own fashion. If we object, we are told that "the world moves still," in spite of the efforts of theologians to arrest it. "Scripture was not intended to teach science." If science, then, can only conjecture a cosmogony, how life was produced, how species originated, how man descended (or ascended), nay, as to the birth of religion itself, the spectre of Galileo warns off interference, and Scripture, by the concession, must retire before it. Science is knowledge reasoned out and verified,—knowledge verified by facts of observation. But then the first of Genesis has not the value of the poorest text-book of geology: it is not reasoned out, but revealed authoritatively. And here, after all, is the stumbling-block for the mere "naturalist": can the supernatural be upon any terms with the natural?—can it, above all, be admitted as really "*super*" to the "*natural*"?—which means, of course, can it have leave to exist?

But we are not going into the argument whether Scripture teaches science, still less to plunge into the conflict as to the first of Genesis. I believe, indeed, that there still exists a method of proof as to this, accessible, not merely to scientists or to the learned of any kind, but also to any common man who deems the matter worthy of sufficient attention. And after all, if Scripture is, in fact, a revelation from God, one *would* expect in it a kind of authentication which would appeal to common men, and not leave them wholly dependent upon the lagging evolution of nineteenth century science, and the not very tender ministry of its priesthood of to-day.

Still we are not going to attempt such proof at this time. Our purpose is rather to interrogate Nature itself, by no means as a whole, but in a

mere fragment of it,— a few letters of its alphabet indeed,— to listen to its voice, to see if we are able to interpret at all its language, and for this compare it (after the approved method of philology) with the alphabet of another language, well known to us all as theological, and see if possibly they may not be near akin. If we should find them, in fact, so much so, as that the one, with the help of the other, should spell out a central truth of theology itself,— and if, moreover, the text used for this could be proved to be as old as, nay, involved in the very constitution of the alphabet itself,— then, without any possible question, as it would appear, the theological truth, whatever it be, must be at least as old as that old natural alphabet, and will be enforced with all the power of demonstration that Nature itself possesses. Then it will be seen that, as Scripture on its side has no quarrel with Nature, but can put sanction on its teaching, as the text at the head of this paper does,— so Nature, on its own side, far from being at issue with Scripture, owns it loyally as the word of the living God.

It is evident that the more simple and elementary the truth taken up for this, the more simple and perspicuous the argument will be. The more fundamental also in Nature, and the more it belongs to that part of it which bears, most of all, the stamp of mind upon it, the more will it seem in order for the light illuminating it to flash out here. Now I know of nothing in which the stamp of mind is more readily discovered than in that numerical system which is more and more being seen to manifest itself in Nature, and most of all in that foundation science where the Builder's hieroglyph would most certainly be found. Chemistry deals with the very substance of all material things, with the primitive atoms and molecules themselves; and "Chemistry," says Herschel, "is, in a most pre-eminent degree, the science of *quantity;* and to enumerate the discoveries which have arisen for it from the mere determination of weights and measures would be merely to give a synopsis of this branch of knowledge." And he goes further than this, and affirms that "Indeed it is a character of all the higher laws of Nature to assume the form of a precise quantitative statement."

Similarly, Alexander von Humboldt declares that "the only remaining and widely diffused hieroglyphic characters still in our writing—*numbers* — appear to us again as *powers of the cosmos*, although in a wider sense than that applied to them by the Italian school."

Once more, Prof. Flint says: "The physical universe has, perhaps, no more general characteristic than this — its laws are mathematical relations. . . . If we are to give any credit to science, there can be no doubt about the weights and measures and numbers. This question, then, is alone left: could anything else than intelligence weigh, measure, and number? Could mere matter know the abstrusest properties of space and time and number, so as to obey them in the wondrous way it does? Could what has taken so much mathematical knowledge and research

to apprehend, have originated with what was ignorant of all quantitative relations? . . . The belief in a Divine Creator is alone capable of rendering rational the fact that mathematical truths are realized in the material world." ("Theism," pp. 136, 137.)

May we not be able to go further than this, however? May it be possible not merely to assure ourselves that there are such, but even to interpret the hieroglyphics? That would indeed be a revelation, if it could be achieved! But is there any hope of it? Would it not be utopian to indulge such a hope? Is there, in fact, any meaning behind them, beyond that which Prof. Flint has given? Now we propose to inquire into the significance of only the first three numbers,—literally, the arithmetical A B C,—and to compare them with the fundamental truths of Christianity (which certainly give us, if this be true, the Name of the Builder of all this glorious fabric), the doctrine of the Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, and the respective offices of these three Persons. If there be any real correspondence apparent, then it will be surely fair to ask what can be the cause of this, except that the God thus presented to us is the Author alike of Nature and of Scripture? And this is a verification which it does not need a scientific expert to make, though it be really scientific; nor indeed any enlarged capacity or attainment of any kind. It is a manifestation of Himself such as God in His care and love to all might exhibit for the help of His creatures, and expect them to give heed to. How many such proofs *must* there be facing us everywhere in Nature, overlooked from sheer incredulity as to His having come so near us, even by those who believe in a Saviour's birth in Bethlehem,—incredulity as to His desire to be known and understood by every soul caring thus to know Him! With what a blazon of proof would the natural sciences, if converted to Christ, surround us!

I have elsewhere shown in detail—a detail which claims investigation at the hands of every candid seeker after truth—that there is a numerical structure of Scripture, as there is of Nature; and that these two have a common key in the spiritual significance of these numbers, as given in Scripture itself. I am only giving here one remarkable example on the side of Nature, and of Nature *self*-interpreted, although in perfect harmony with the scriptural use, and one which may well claim to be decisive. Certainly Christians have not had in their hands to lay the foundations of arithmetic, nor agreed to hide there in so secure a manner the evidences of their own belief. Nor, again, can it be supposed that they have constructed their belief out of the powers of these primary numbers. But "it is the glory of God to conceal a thing," as "it is the glory of kings to search out a matter." (Prov. xxv. 2.) And "if thou criest after wisdom, and liftest up thy voice for understanding,—if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." (Prov. ii. 3–5.)

There are then hidden things which are of priceless value to us. The earth but partially discloses her lodes and treasures of ore. But how little thought is there of these being such, even in the word of God itself; necessarily, therefore, how little search for them! If they are found also, how little belief is there in their value! The gems are counted but as common stones. How soon shall those who think so much of reason be waked up to find that there is *reason everywhere*,— divinest reason, put there by the Creator of the human mind, and who condescends to "reason" with the beings He has made?

Let us proceed to consider the numbers. Of each there are two forms, the cardinal and the ordinal. Taking both into account, primacy, unity, soleness, are evidently the thoughts that inhere in the first number. We shall seek out what other thoughts may be involved in, or connect themselves in a natural way with these. Then we shall inquire as to the possible theological bearings of all this. The argument must necessarily be weak at first, but it will be cumulative, and rapidly gather strength as we proceed. At least, so it is contended; and the thing to be proved has interest enough in it surely to provoke inquiry.

The ordinal of "one" is "first." If we apply this in the sphere of Nature, it is plain that what is *first* — the true beginning of all (and science does not now doubt a beginning) must be, without doubt, the cause of all: the *first*, if we really get back to that, *is cause;* and the first of all is thus the cause of all.

Suppose we *could* go back to the beginning, and that we found there, to the collapse of all our hopes, no God at all; nothing but such a cloud of elementary particles as our modern materialists can well believe in,— they must and will allow that this world-mist has been the cause of everything that exists to-day. Whatever the method — however the thing has evolved,— yet there cannot be really a single thought in the mind, or a particle of the air we breathe, that that mist shall not account for. And so Prof. Tyndall, in those "musings on the Matterhorn," which have been the occasion of so much musing on the part of others since, tells us, that his —

"Thought naturally ran back to its remoter origin and sculpture. Nor did thought halt there, but wandered on through molten worlds to that nebulous haze which philosophers have regarded, and with good reason, as the proximate source of all material things. I tried to look at this universal cloud, *containing within itself the prediction of all that has since occurred.* I tried to imagine it as the seat of those forces whose action was to issue in solar and stellar systems, and all that they involve. Did that formless fog contain potentially the *sadness* with which I regarded the Matterhorn?"

And this is all so clear to him that to make good he thinks we might well even "recast our definitions of matter and force"!

For it is plain that no one of us can believe in a self-creation of things, or their coming out of absolute nothing; no matter how long a time you allow them to do it in. Even the growth of a smaller into a larger sub-

stance (as of a seed into a plant) would of course be quite impossible, except by the ministration to it of surrounding elements, as moisture, air, and soil, in the case instanced. We may refuse the gross materialism of Prof. Tyndall; but the passage quoted well illustrates the impossibility we have noted, of separating in this way between "first" and "cause."

Of course, it is not meant, however, that a "first" always implies this. You may have the first of a series, which in no wise depend on it, but (along with itself) upon what is back of all together. We are not now concerned with these smaller beginnings, but with what is so in its highest and fullest sense. We are on the search after God, and must expect that what is less full and high will give the less perfect view or image of Him. Our contention is simply this, that, in the most absolute way of looking at it, the "first" implies cause. "The First" is the Name God claims as His, and this implies His being the Cause of all else. That nothing comes out of nothing, which is, in its rightful meaning, the faith of all, assures us that the great First of all must be the Fountain of all.

But we may take another step now, and a very easy step it shall be. A cause implies *power*, and mark, *for its effect*, sufficient, and so *almighty* power. So Prof. Tyndall speaks of the primeval world-fog as containing "potentially" his sadness on a certain occasion. Clear it is, surely, that a cause is not that till it has *produced the effect;* and thereby it has demonstrated its perfect power (*quoad hoc*, almighty) to produce it. The First Cause of the Universe must at least thus far be Almighty. There can be no need to dwell on this.

A third step now: we are seeking what is highest of its kind: the highest kind of cause we know, what is it? Perhaps one might urge even that we should not know cause or potency at all, if we had not found it in our *will* as potent. I take this to be true, although it was so early a lesson, shrouding itself in the first instinctive impulse of the babe seeking its mother's breast, that it may be better to take safer ground, and say that the *highest* cause we know is in will, choice, determination. "I will" would have no meaning, apart from the sense of power. True, that for executive ability an apparatus of nerves and bones and muscles has been somehow, and as it were in knowledge of my need, provided for me. True, my will may, from the failure of this, be practically impotent in a given case: yet even here this will of mine makes me, spite of all opposition to it, in this sense master of myself, sovereign in my inner citadel,—able, in fact, to distinguish myself by this very means from the outer machinery of flesh, which I *ought* to control and cannot.

Just as the highest "first" we know, then, is cause and potency; so, and as clearly, the highest *cause* we know is will. And it is highest, not because of the amount of power that is wielded by it, but because it is measured, controlled, *purposive*. No one doubts that this *is* the highest

quality of cause, and for this reason; and no one would give up the possession of an insect's strength, governed by an intelligent will, for the resistless might of a hurricane, which is not so,— if, after all, there *be* a hurricane, even, of this kind!

Put together all this, then, by most easy suggestion, there emerges for us a Figure far more definite than the "nebulous haze" that shrouds the beginning of Prof. Tyndall's world; and which is a true figure of PRIMACY,— of a first. It has been legitimately evolved under the careful curb of reason, demanding what is implied in the idea, as yet only of the ordinal form of a single number, and already we have got what may well stand as a fundamental conception of Deity. The King's image appears already, if faintly, upon the current medium of exchange: a Supreme Will acting in power as the sufficient Cause of the Universe, intelligent, purposive. If this be the image on the coin, we know Whose image and superscription it alone can be.

But we have still to look at the cardinal form of the number—"one," unity. And here, as before, we have to give this its highest and most varied expression; then, putting all this together, to ask to what it points. It need not even now be doubted that this will be by a whole heaven removed from Tyndall's world-fog.

And first, *physically*, what is the highest and fullest expression of unity which we find in the material world? Manifestly, it is *organic* unity; and that is as much as to say, the unity of *life*. Life is the great organizer; and, from plant to man, weaves together its matchless tissues into wholes of marvelous symmetry and adaptation. Every part is fitted to every other part and to the whole, in a working practical unity far beyond the mere naked oneness of a single element. A mountain-mass of *this* would be but a bigger *lump*. The self-contained living thing is an *individual*.

The thought here is indeed hardly needed to complete the ideal image which has been rising before us: for the intelligent, purposive Will-Cause of the universe must needs be a "living God." And of course this organic unity is not true of Him, but only the shadow of what is ineffably higher than itself. We are but using earth-boundary-lines to mark off— not to *measure*— the heavens. But above this unity of life, however connected with it, rises another unity far higher, and therefore pointing more toward God,— the *personality*, which is other than the corporeity, and other than its life. But this, if disputed, we need not here contend about. Life and personality are at least the expression of unities which plainly enter into the idea of God, if we are to possess one; and no one will contend that He of whom Scripture speaks is not Living and Personal.

But this does not end the correspondence: personality itself leads us further, in that character which seems very clearly to distinguish it from the constantly changing material body. The unity of *consciousness* is such

as our bodies, ever in flux, have not—a unity in *time*. With all the changes wrought in the course, say, of fifty years, we are witnesses to ourselves that we are, after all, the same persons as fifty years ago. We have not, in that sense, changed in all that time, though the body has been renewed, physiologists tell us, some seven times over. Here there is a unity in time, an unchangeable identity, which, if carried to its highest conceivable terms, develops yet further that thought of God which has been growing steadily, and keeping step with us, as we have pursued our way. Now it overshadows us with the suggestion of the Unchangeable, and so the Eternal. "Jehovah" meant this for the Hebrew; and here the figure of the Hebrew's God is on the coin. But the Hebrew did not stamp it there: who did?

But again: there is another personal unity, which man necessarily conceives, and some aim after, but which is seen but fragmentarily among those that dwell on earth; all the more fittingly the attribute of Him we are seeking. This is *moral* unity, a character of consistent harmony in which nothing is disproportionate, nothing defective, nothing discordant. Righteousness (which is practical harmony with one's relationships) and truth, which is identity between the representation and the fact, come naturally under this. Self-consistency in all positions is only possible to perfect goodness: and this fills out the full blessedness that we conceive as God's.

Add to this one last thing, which still the number covers, that God is One: there is no other;—none to dispute His absolute sway. Here again the old Hebrew creed is that of Nature.

All these ideas, then, find unforced expression under this first arithmetical number. Together they present us with a very sufficient summary of our faith as to God: not, of course, yet the Trinity; but God as One, living, personal, immutable, eternal, righteous, and true, the Almighty, Maker of the universe, and whom, in this sense at least, we must call Father, perfect in this relationship as in all other. Atheism, polytheism, pantheism, agnosticism, are all set aside by such a faith as this. There is not a main thought, as it would appear, that can be developed out of the number that is incongruous with this, or does not help, indeed, to set it forth. Primacy, unity, soleness, in their highest developments, speak of Him. This would seem a most extraordinary fact, and worthy of attentive consideration. This correspondence between Nature and Scripture can hardly be accidental, and *cannot be of man*. Is it possible that Nature is *meant* in this way to bear witness of the Hand that has moulded her? Is anything, in fact, more reasonable than this?

Two.

But the full Christian image of God we do not yet see; and we must now take up the second number to find if it will continue the story of the first. If it do so, the wonder must increase, and the difficulty of

any solution of it, save one, be felt correspondingly. For the testimony now required is of a very different, almost of an opposite character to that which we have been considering, and, though Father and Son are indeed one God, the distinction between them we must expect to find now dwelt upon, even while we are reminded of this oneness also! Diverse, almost self-contradictory characters, one might think, to be found here together! And yet this will not be too hard a test, if we are right in believing that the handwriting we are reading is meant to convey such a message to us.

Now, at first sight, the second number *is*, in some sense, the very opposite of the first; *One*, in whatever way it applies, excludes difference; but *two affirms it.* And this is the key-note of its significance both in nature and in Scripture. Two individuals, even though exactly alike, are yet different by the whole breadth of that individuality. But difference easily runs into the thought of opposition, conflict, and so begins to suggest the possibility of *evil.* This thought of evil enters largely into the natural use. "They are not one," we say; "there is a difference between them."

"Two" is also the first number that *divides.* "One" cannot do so, as we all know. So evil too divides: it has separated man from God; it separates man from man; it has brought in *death*, which is the separation of soul from body.

Two *tends* thus to evil, but it is not necessarily evil, or we should have no possible use for it in the quest we are now upon. Only with two comes in the thought of relationship; and language presents the other side in its use of *seconding.* To "second" is to "confirm, succour, help," and to *take even an inferior place* in order to do this. And here there begins to dawn on us the light we are seeking.

But notice first that the idea of difference, and to a large extent the assumption of evil as present, enters into the better significance itself. "The testimony of two men is true," says Scripture. But how is it "true"? May not the testimony of *one* be true too? Undoubtedly, the meaning is, it can be *taken* as true; it is valid as evidence. But why cannot the testimony of *one* be taken as true? Well; the witness may be mistaken, of course: even that will be probably due to defect in some way,—to evil, in this sense of evil; but how often, even so, may real mistake be due to something worse than this! how frequently is it due to prejudice, passion, enmity, and such like! And the moral reason is, in fact, the principal one, why a single witness is to be distrusted so much, if not refused: *evil has come in;* and there is the main need of a second witness to confirm the first.

But in any case the truth or validity of the double witness is founded upon *difference.* If upon examination we find the second witness only repeating the testimony,—still more, the words of the first, this correspondence, instead of producing greater confidence, *destroys it.* We say,

this is a contrived affair: the one has learned his lesson from the other. We need the evidence of two persons, not of one; and this is only one person talking with two mouths. We need to have diversity of interests, feelings, general standard, with yet a confirmation of the point in question,—a sort of stereoscopic view of the facts, which shall give them due solidity. Thus the very help given in *seconding* implies a difference, often a moral one: in other words, the presence of evil.

What then, are the ideas presented to us under this number, two? On the one hand, those of difference, opposition, conflict; of evil, producing division between God and man, between man and man, and going on to division between soul and body, the natural extreme of evil —death.

In connection with this, though in an opposite interest, *judgment* is the putting of difference, the dividing according to difference: "who made me a judge or a divider over you?"

On the other hand, we have the thought of "seconding," confirmation, valid witness, help, taking an inferior place to give help; even here with the implication of evil having come in and created the necessity for this.

How different is the sphere of ideas in which we are moving here from that into which we were brought in the case of the former number! And again, we have not travelled outside of nature for these suggestions: they have come to us from the natural use of language, with no sort of help from theology at all, save perhaps as far as the view that sin has brought in death may be held to be theological. But how is it that there rises up before us here a Figure, in most respects so different from the former one, yet so familiar, and so allied to it in our thoughts? We have got back of Christianity, outside of all possible influence from it, yet to find, some way, the Christ of Christianity meeting us, as if the very stones of earth's foundations were in fact rising up to prophesy of Him! And is not this indeed prophecy, where no "human element" can come in to discredit the inspiration? Is not the king's image upon the coin again? And if so, what primeval workman stamped it there?

Christ is as manifestly before us here, with all the sacred sorrow of His humiliation, as in the first place we had the Father. God and man in one person, He exhibits in this way a marvellous *difference* within Himself,—two natures far apart brought into mysterious relationship. In Himself, therefore, at the very first thought, He claims—and it is His glory to claim—this number as His own. Who in the whole range of personal existence can claim it as He?

And what is He in Godhead? As we know, the Son; the *Second Person.* And what in manhood? The Son of man: the *Second Man!* And why the *Second* Man? Why, because evil has come in, and spoiled the glory of the first. And here too is an unspeakable *difference:* for, if manhood is to be raised up again, it cannot be in the old condition

merely; no good in simply bringing back into that so soon lost, and which might be, therefore, so soon lost again! God never simply restores: He replaces the first with what is different from it and far better. Yet it is not the mere setting aside in judgment of man, but *help*, salvation for him, and "the Second Man is the Lord from heaven" (1 Cor. xv).

With Him comes in a *second*—a "new creation;" a second paradise,—not the lost Eden, but the garden of God. "Behold," says the Voice from the Throne, "I make all things new." (Rev. xxi. 5).

Thus He is the Seconder,—the Helper, Saviour. He has met in conflict the adversary of our souls, that He might deliver us; and for this He has come down into the lower place, far below His natural equality with the Father,—below angels; nay, below the proper estate and dignity of man himself. He has come down to the place where the division which sin has caused is found at its worst—into the place of separation from God Himself, as witness the cry from the cross, out of the darkness it interpreted: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

He has come down, too, to the place of death, the division of soul from body: "He humbled Himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the Cross."

The number cleaves to Him in this way all through His path. No wonder; for throughout it He is the "True Witness," testifying, amid all the contradiction that sin has brought in, to the perfection of Him to do whose will alone He came: Nay, in creation He has already been that,—the Logos, the Word of God,—the utterance and revelation of His mind. No wonder then, that creation should bear witness of Him, as it truly does.

No wonder, either, that, being this, after His work accomplished, He should be the appointed judge of all, the Divider to every man according to the difference found in each, the "quick and dead" alike.

Examine this throughout, and see if the "exact sciences" have no Gospel in them. Who has had power over nature, to place it there? Who has graven upon the current money of the realm of thought the sacred figure of the thorn-crowned King?

Three.

What then of the number 3? Does it too change the manner of speech, and yet continue the story to which thus far we have been listening? In one respect, the help to interpretation that we have been finding hitherto fails with the third numeral. We have no record in language of any significance attaching to the third numeral. Even this lack may, however, itself have significance; and we may note it and store it up for such use as every natural fact should have, if one supreme Mind produced and rules in nature. Meanwhile there must be

surely some other way of arriving at the end desired. If a worker may be known by his work, is there no *work* accomplished by this numeral, which will give it character? This question must, we think, be answered affirmatively; such work there is; and the more we examine it, the more, perhaps, we shall be impressed with the value of its testimony.

Some have speculated upon the possibility of a *fourth dimension.* But, according to the witness of all around us there are but *three,*—length, breadth and thickness: three modes of extension which alone are actually existent in the world, and which, it would seem, are alone possible to thought either. Moreover, to have any solid, tangible reality whatever, we must have this *third dimension.* What are length and breadth without thickness? A pencil line drawn upon paper is really more than that. Thus the number ^{3} attached to any other number denotes the cube of it. It is the sign of cubic—that is, *solid*—measure; and the third measurement is the measure of content.

Three, then, so taken, is ideally the great producer, the materializer, that which converts the idea into reality; thus manifests it, reveals it, brings out what it is. The architect's plan is practically in two dimensions: it cannot be carried out except the third comes in to help.

Let us keep this in mind, and still pursue the inquiry. Two dimensions cannot give solidity: correspondingly, two straight lines cannot enclose a space. That is one of the things which reason, transcending experience, affirms as an absolute, universal truth. I have not compared all possible two lines when I declare this, nor do I need to do so. It is one of those judgments which reveal the native power of the mind.

Two straight lines cannot enclose a space. They cannot therefore in this sense effect a proper *separation.* Two, as we have seen, is the number of division; but we are not thinking of mere division now, but of separation as *enclosure,*— setting apart. As if, for instance, I had a field to cultivate, and for which my hedge must go all round.

Connect this thought with that of the third dimension. The moment you get this, a thought—as the architect's plan—becomes a realization, and, embodying itself in space, separates itself from what is round about it. It is not a destructive separation, but a constructive one, and in the interests of what is positive gain and fruit.

Yet there may be implied, as in a hedge around a field, a previous or an outside evil from which the hedge is to separate; but if the field is to grow nothing, the hedge has no significance: it separates *to,* not simply *from,*—sets apart. Here, for the present, then, we may pause; we have got a distinct, *workable* idea of the number; let us consider the application.

For the Christian and in Scripture, the Holy Spirit is, as we know, the third Person of the Trinity. Apart from Him, we could not, of course, speak of a Trinity at all. With Him the Godhead is manifest: too obvious and easy a thought, perhaps, to impress us much with its significance.

But the Holy Spirit is also the Revealer. In another sense from that in which Christ is the Witness of God, the Holy Spirit is the witness. He is the Inditer of Scripture, through men inspired of Him—the Relator, as Christ is in Person and Work the substance of the relation. The Spirit is the *productive* witness, as in creation, brooding upon the face of the deep, or garnishing the heavens.

But He is the Producer in another way. Apart from Him, salvation itself is not actualized in the soul. New birth is of the Spirit; and "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." With new birth sanctification begins in the soul; and as in the number of which we have been speaking, production and, setting apart are found together: the separation is from evil to bring forth fruit to God. As saith the Bridegroom of the Song of Songs: "A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse." And the heart of the spouse answers: "Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits."

So, once more, the figure is on the coin: the full, glorious image now. But the office of the Spirit may explain to us, what a little while since was left aside for consideration. As the worker in men it will be found that His Personality, though revealed distinctly enough in the word of God, is yet characteristically much hidden in His work. He is no mere "influence," far from it. He can be grieved and vexed, searches and knows, sends and is sent, divides unto men severally as He will, guides into truth, makes intercession. Yet, while this is true, wherever pictures, types, parables of the Spirit, He is presented rather in His work, or as identified with those in whom His work is.

Take an illustration from the book of Exodus: God speaks of Himself to Moses as identifying Himself with three men, who are thus in some way the display of what He is. "God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob:" this He declares to be His memorial Name (Ex. iii. 15). Now, looking back to Moriah, the mount of sacrifice, we can see in Abraham's offering of Isaac no obscure picture of the Father and the Son (Gen. xxii.) But where is the Spirit seen in Jacob? Why, in that divine work which makes out of the "supplanter" an Israel, a "prince with God."

Take an example from the New Testament. In the 15th of Luke, where the Lord shows us the heart of God told out in the recovery of the lost, the Father comes into plain sight in the last parable; in the first, the Shepherd's search after the sheep shows quite plainly too the Saviour-Son. But in the *woman* seeking the lost piece of silver, the Spirit can be only seen, not personally, but in the Church, commonly figured in that way.

Once indeed, when the Spirit is seen in a bodily shape as a dove, at the baptism of Jesus, we have a partial exception; partial, as it seems, because the bird of love and sorrow is, as one of the sacrificial birds, rather the figure of the Man of sorrows, upon whom it descends.

Again, where the Lord seems to be making the strictest comparison, and where the word He uses is actually that used for the Spirit also,—"the *wind* (*pneuma*) bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth,"—not only is the figure that of invisibility, and it is known by its *effect*, but the Lord adds, not as you would expect, "so is the *Spirit*," but "so is every one that is *born* of the Spirit (Jno. iii. 8).

No more need be said in this respect; but, looking back now at this third numeral, to note again, that we had to find its character not in itself but in its *effects*, how complete once more is the parallel. The very anomaly, as it might seem, is really what makes more striking the analogy. The type is perfect.

The Three One.

Not that we have yet done with it, however. We have found, distinctly enough, in this nature-witness, the three Persons of the Godhead; have we no intimation that these three Persons are One God? Is it too much to expect, when we have found so much, still to find more? Well, let us put the question: how many answers may we not miss—answers of precious import too,—just because we do not put the question!

We must now then look at these three numbers as a whole, and test them by their *common* significance: if we find this, we must further ask, do these common elements point in the direction of our search? is their message really this, that these three Persons are One God?

Now there is one very evident feature in which these three numbers are united: they are all prime numbers. That means, as we know, that they are incapable of true division. But we could not go a single step beyond and find this. The number 4 splits at once into two halves, when tested by that divisive number two, which in that way so strongly suggests evil. Four is thus in Scripture the number of weakness and tendency to failure,—thus of the creature; and, divided by this number, it yields again the fatal number of division and of death.

But the three numbers preceding maintain their integrity, and thus equally and together bear the stamp of the divine. But this is only a first step in the direction we are taking.

Let us now, as we are surely by this time warranted in doing, take up Scripture as a means of inquiry, and compare it with what we have already ascertained. Scripture uses with full confidence these natural analogies, and thus frankly and fully commits itself to nature,—has no suspicion or jealousy of it at all. The apostle's saying, which he gives as the "message" of One much greater, is an illustration of this, "God is light" is a direct comparison of Him to that which still in its inmost being is a mystery, though men may have their theories about it. As a phenomenon it is a very complex one. Still, it is plain that

the beam of light, as refracted in its spectral image, shows not merely a seven-fold glory of harmonious colour, but is a *trinity* of radiant energy, disclosing itself as heat, light, and chemical power, which is now called "actinism." In the spectrum, the central light-rays blend at one end with the heat, at the other with the actinic rays, only the central band of colors, standing between the others, being, of course, the visible light. The analogy is so far obvious, though it is one which the science of the apostle might well be incapable of making. Christ, Himself the witnessing "Light," brings the message to us that God is this: Father and Spirit being alike unseen of man. The warming, vivifying rays, which the manifest light carries with it, are no unapt symbol of the Father. The unseen, actinic rays, with their transforming power, are the no less apt symbol of the Spirit's energy. The sun, with his luminous "photosphere,—the light on a material candlestick,—is again He in whom "dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9), "and who is the effulgence of [the Father's] glory" (Heb. i. 3). Christ as God and man alike, "the Sun of Righteousness" yet to "arise with healing in His wings" (Mal. iv. 2), and bring the day. The harmony of Nature and Scripture is here maintained throughout; and even the numerical progression is in harmony also.

But let us follow this leading also further. "Light" is "that which makes manifest" (Eph. v. 13). The fantasies begotten of obscurity are dispelled by it, and the truth becomes apparent. Truth is the accordance of the idea with the fact; and this unity or identity comes under the range of the first number, even as in the Genesis-record of creation the light appears on the first day. God as One in His moral nature is the True,—consistent with Himself, and with the reality of things everywhere.

But Christ also is the Light, and the Radiator of the light, the True Witness, bringing into the soul the valid evidence of the truth. As God and Man, He is the two-fold Witness, entirely competent as such, true and trustworthy. Who could believe in the light, and yet not accept the Sun?

But again, the Spirit as the Sanctifier, the Worker of reality, the Actualizer of the divine idea in man, is no less the True; and the scriptural phrase for holiness agrees with this: it is the taking things as they are, accepting things at their real value. It is "the holiness of *truth*" (Eph. iv. 24, R. V.) and the Spirit is truth" (1 John. v. 6).

Once more, the numbers agree: the three are one in the self-same respect as the Scripture testifies as to the Persons of the Godhead. The three are a tri-unity, a trinity, even as the God of the Scriptures is a Triune God.

But there is another thing beside Light, that the same apostle bears witness that God is: "God is *Love*" (1 Jno. iv. 8); and this too will be most manifest in Him who is God manifest, and who is God's love-gift

to mankind. But this is found in all three Persons, and must be capable of deduction under all three numbers, if there is to be no defect in this natural presentation of things. This is what we seek, the testimony of nature as parallel with Scripture, and which all that we have found hitherto encourages us to expect.

Now, under the first number, we got the idea of consistency, harmony, accord. The number one, we have seen never to *divide*. This "at-oneness" is assuredly the atmosphere of love: "love worketh no ill to his neighbor" (Rom. xiii. 10). This may be a negative, rather than a positive character; still it is a character of that which we are seeking. As we do not come under this number to the breach caused by evil, so we have not yet the activity of love to heal the breach. The preservative spirit of concord, therefore, is as yet all that one can expect.

Under the second number, evil is seen as having come in, and divine love in its fullness is revealed. "Hereby know we love, because He laid down His life for us" (1 Jno. iii. 16, Gk). God and man are brought together in the very Person of the Mediator; and in His work for men, love stays at nothing whereby the end may be attained. The spirit of concord is here become the spirit of reconciliation: the Witness to God is the Saviour of men.

Under the third number, the work of the Spirit of God is the carrying out and making effectual the work of Christ in man's behalf. The soul of man becomes the garden of God, and receives the nurture necessary for the production of the fruit in which He takes pleasure. In him that keepeth His word is the love of God *perfected* (1 Jno. iv. 6).

Here then, with whatever imperfection told, is the first leaf only of that gospel of which we may be sure, if this be the beginning, the natural sciences must have much to say. The effort of the day is largely to force them into indifference, if not hostility to divine truth. Nature is neither hostile nor indifferent. And that numerical structure which we find in chemistry undeniably impressed upon the foundations of the world, but which as truly exists in nature and in Scripture everywhere, is, I believe, a God-given key to the correspondence of one with the other—a most signal help to the consistent interpretation of both. Mere utilitarianism, though quite unworthy of the name, may despise what it would consider the mysticism of all this. Harness nature to the machinery by which man's work is to be done, that it can understand. Nay, "speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee,"—that will be approved, so long as the lessons gathered are to be merely earthy, and plenty of room is allowed for man's imagination to roam free from the control of God. You may speculate, as you please, upon elemental fogs as the cause of the sadness of a man of science, and even so your sanity shall not be questioned: for the imagination, even though it be but the whirl of the livelier brain-particles, still must be admitted to belong to man. But

gravely to make nature talk in parables,—seriously to believe that they are *there*,—to credit God with sending messages to us by such a channel,—this will be for many too preposterous even for examination. Here induction, deduction, argument of every kind will perhaps be vain: the prophets of such things must be held for an anachronism. They should have lived when the world was in its credulous youth.

This is not the age of gold but the age of iron, and we are rightly doubtful about that age of gold.

And yet, if even a time of universal scepticism were upon us, it should be lawful, one would think, to *doubt the doubt*. The perplexity and unrest, the sorrow and strife, with which the world is filled, are certain: there was One who dared to say once, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." It *would* be good if one could believe in God speaking to us in a voice like *that!* It would be good to believe even that Nature were His other hand put round us, clasping the hand of revelation, in His earnest desire to draw us to Himself. The belief that such is the fact is perhaps apology enough for speaking.

APPENDIX II

A STUDY OF THE NUMERICAL SYMBOLISM OF SCRIPTURE

THERE is, I suppose, no student of Scripture who has not caught sight, to a greater or less extent, of a symbolism of numbers to be found in it. He who has implicit faith in "*all* Scripture" being given by inspiration of God will not doubt that the numbers in it, being part of it and sharing its inspiration, must therefore be "profitable," as all else in it; and spiritually, which is the profitableness which God has given it for us. But a spiritual meaning attaching to the use of numbers can hardly be other than a symbolic one; falling in thus with the general typical and parabolic language of the Bible, which evidently pervades so much of it. Take the sevens of the book of Revelation generally, or the twelves of the heavenly city, no one could, probably doubt it; but upon all this I need not now dwell, the whole present volume with others of the series being such an extended proof of consistent meaning running through the numbers of Scripture, and imbedded in the very structure of it as, if it does not satisfy any one who will patiently examine it, as to its truth in the main, nothing else that I can say will be likely to do so.

I say "its truth in the main," because it would be a very strange presumption to suppose that there were no blots or disfigurements such as are apt every where to affect all human work, and especially where it is employed upon that which is best and highest. Any one who would take such signs of human infirmity to invalidate the whole of that with which they are connected will have in consistency to reject almost all that man has ever put his hand to. And yet such arguments prevail with many, if not to disprove, at least to cast such doubt upon what is presented to them, as to prevent all real examination of the matter. The thing is shelved: if, with Gamaliel, they will not fight against it, lest haply they should be found to strive against God, like him too, they will leave it to prove this by its success elsewhere, and not trouble themselves in the meanwhile overmuch about it.

To those who are disposed to settle the matter by minute criticism

of the kind referred to, I would suggest a consideration of the very opposite kind, an argument drawn not from particulars, but from a general view of the subject, and which ought to stand the more securely because of the breadth of its foundation. In the present volume the material of such foundation is gathered out of the whole book of Psalms. every psalm, *every verse* of every psalm, is cited in evidence; and that not in any disorderly manner, or with any fancifully devised arrangement of the proof, but taken from first to last in the very order of Scripture, and with jealous respect to every hint that can be gathered from any source, as title or alphabetic arrangement, or aught else. All this, remember, is taken together in the whole and in every part of it, not merely to prove a numerical structure of the book, which would be comparatively a small thing, but *through this to show the meaning of the whole and of every part of it.* Every division, subdivision, section, verse, must more or less contribute to this end. The numerical harmony must be the key to a spiritual harmony which emphasizes everywhere the distinctive features of each part in such a way as to combine them into an intelligible and intelligent whole. If this can be done,—if it has been with any success accomplished,—who can even imagine it to be a mere flight of fancy, working in obedience to a strong will to have it so, that has accomplished this?

If, on the other hand, there be no way of accounting for this, except by there being somewhere a Mind behind it, which has arranged these marvellous harmonies, then assuredly the book in which they are found is a book which has upon it the *seal of its inspiration*, not only as a whole but in its details, in such a manner as to bid defiance to all the higher criticism of the day to remove it from it. And this alone would make it of inestimable value to every truth-seeking mind: But not merely this: the seal is set at the same time upon the *interpretation* of the book. Granting, of course, that there may be mistakes shown here and there, as is fully admitted, yet, the main features cannot be a mistake; and even the details cannot be to auy large extent: they are the artist's strokes which combine to make the picture; and the truthfulness of the picture as a whole insures the general truthfulness of color and shade.

However, my purpose now is to take up the numbers, and to inquire more fully than I have yet done into their symbolic meanings. These are the keys to the locks, for they are not one but various: and it will be understood that they need to be carefully modeled to the wards that are to receive them, if they are to turn without being forced. Much difficulty has arisen from lack of precision as to these meanings, while the positively contradictory ones advocated by different writers have been a stumbling-block with many as to any faith in them at all. I do not propose, however, to examine these differences, but to give the grounds only for those which satisfy myself, and which have abundantly

proved themselves in experimental application. It will be found also that these meanings have their roots in nature as well as in Scripture, and are thus counter-checked on either side; while the numbers themselves are not indefinite, but few in number; the larger ones being but resultants of their factors, as 10, is 5 × 2, or of the addition of certain others together, according to warrant in Scripture itself; as 7 is 4 + 3 and 5, as will be shown hereafter, is 4+1. Plainly, without some Scriptural or natural warrant, the latter method would be quite unjustifiable, as any numbers might be arbitrarily taken in this way, and entire uncertainty of all meaning be the result.

The series of numbers which we may consider fundamental is, I believe, but seven: answering to the seven notes in music, which by their combinations produce all the various melody and harmony with which we are acquainted. Seven is the well-known number of perfection, which, taken from the completion of God's six days' work with the Sabbath of His approving rest, has been used for the division of time ever since, and in Israel was the basis of most of the larger divisions, except the year itself. Thus the months were lunar, (except the partial one intercalated to keep the year straight,) and the 7th month specially marked out by the day of atonement and the feast of tabernacles (Israel's celebration of rest); while there was a sabbatic *year* as well as day, and a jubilee at the end of a *week* of sabbatic years—a still more joyous rest.

Consistently with this, the number 8 speaks always in Scripture of a new beginning—what is new in contrast with the old. But this I shall give proof of later, and it is largely accepted in this way. It needs only to be mentioned here to give definiteness to the assurance that in Scripture the numerical series is in fact of seven numbers only. All others seem to be but compounds of these.

Let us now take up the numbers separately.

ONE.

The number speaks for itself of the ideas connected with it. They are rooted in all language, so that it cannot be hard to test the applicability of any that we attribute to it. Yet it is naturally one of the fullest in meaning in the whole series, and it will be seen how various are the applications that can be made of a few primary thoughts here: a thing of essential importance to any numerical structure, as every series of numbers must of course, begin with this, which must have, therefore, a largeness suited to such various connection. After the first two numbers we shall find this rapidly diminishing in proportion to their less constant use.

We may for lucidity divide the meanings of the number into subheads under which to group its different applications.

1. Soleness.

Soleness is the exclusion of another: as where Zechariah says of the day of the Kingdom soon to come: "In that day there shall be one Lord, and His Name one."

Under this head we may group also—

Singularity, uniqueness;

Solitariness; which leads on to—

Barrenness; the solitude of impotence.

In the opposite direction to this, however, soleness may imply—

Sufficiency, power; that which stands alone must have power to stand alone; thus—

Independency; admitting no other; which in a bad sense may be a mere synonym for—

Pride; and in a creature in his relation to the Creator—

Rebellion.

But soleness may have also another set of meanings, as where I have to pronounce what are apparently two things to be but one, I affirm their—

Unchangeableness, consistency, perpetuity, are but identity in progressive time; and again—

Truth is the identity of an idea with fact or object; as—

Knowledge is but the identification of these.

2. Unity.

Unity we may distinguish as the oneness which proceeds from the *uniting* of different elements, whether these be physical, mental, moral or spiritual. *One cannot divide.* Thus we have—

At-oneness, harmony, consistency, congruity, integrity, righteousness, which is consistency with relationship, and of which *obedience* to authority is only one form; *concord, peace.*

We may pass on now to thoughts which are connected with the ordinal form of the number, which here have special importance, as—

3. Primacy.

The first natural suggestion is that of—

Supremacy, headship, rule;—

Beginning; and putting these things together, the supreme, the absolute beginning is the controlling cause of all that exists beside (see Appendix I). We may put down therefore—

Cause, source, occasion (which is a lesser cause); and then—*foundation, ground,* (and so) *plea.*

Of course, it will be understood that not all these thoughts are synonymous with *soleness, unity, primacy,* as contained in this first number. But these three ideas naturally lead to them all, *suggest* them. A symbol is just that which in this way *suggests* what it does not explicitly

convey. A cock crowing is not the symbol of a cock at all; but it may be a symbol of the dawn. The numbers come far closer than this to what they stand for. Their meanings have, as stated, their roots in nature, and have all been worked out in this very way. Thus when we find such things as these characterizing the first psalm of a series, or the first section of a psalm, or the first verse of a section, there can be no doubt that this fulfills the requirement of a numerical structure; nor, when we find such conformity continually maintained, that a numerical structure is in fact what we have before us.

But yet this does not complete entirely the range of thought which may be found under this number; as it is evident that there may be combinations of these thoughts which may equally find place under it. Thus—

Life is the great organizer, or *cause* of the *unity* which is every where found in the animal and vegetable kingdoms; while—

Personality is the proper unity of man as a spiritual being. Then—

Will is allowed to be that which gives us our original conception of *cause*, and is plainly the assertion of *personal independence.* Thus we reach—

Choice, Election. Then again,—

Grace is a state of favor (*at-oneness*) with God freely (*i. e. sovereignly*) conferred.

It is remarkable how the greater part by far of all these thoughts unite together to image God as the sole personal First Cause and Ruler of all, omniscient, almighty, unchangeable, eternal, righteous and yet gracious; God of the Old Testament and of the New,—Jehovah, Father. And this tends greatly to confirm the naturalness of this grouping as designed of God. Gathered together entirely without thought of this, we find that we have gathered a group of special witnesses, all giving testimony in one direction, and uniting to put God in the first place, which is always His! If we think yet that this is chance, what can we think when we find the second number as much bearing witness to the Second Person of the Godhead as the first to the First? Aye, and again the third to the Third? If this looks like arrangement, who has arranged it? If it be chance, does it not seem as if chance itself had become a worshiper of God? Let us worship Him in it then, too.

But this has been already taken up at more length (Appendix I). We must now go on to consider the number

TWO.

If One points to the exclusion of difference, difference is the very thing which Two proclaims. This note of difference runs through all its meanings. We will group them, as in the former case, under subheads for better distinction.

1. Relation.

With the thought of "another" there comes in necessarily that of *relation*. A second, if only as that, must have some relation to the first, If it be a true *second*, as we say, then it is a relation of—

Help, support, confirmation, assurance; and thus it is in Scripture the number of

Competent testimony. We have this idea expressed in our word "seconding," and in Scripture in Ecclesiastes iv. 9–12. Already this supposes need and something adverse, and thus we are naturally led to the thought of—

Preservation, deliverance, salvation.

Another thought naturally contained in it is that of—

Service, ministry.

Then we have, as still connected, but in a more external way,—

Addition, increase, growth; and these lead on to—

Progress, movement, activity.

Spiritually, *attachment* is almost synonymous with *love*, near akin to which we have *desire*, the expression of which, to one thought able to grant it, is in *prayer.*

Attachment, too, may be otherwise read as *association, partnership, fellowship.*

In its ordinal form as—

2. Second.

The number is clearly expressive of—

Dependence, which leads naturally on to *faith*, which is dependent attachment. But otherwise it may be read in the sense of *inferiority;* and so *lowliness, humiliation, subjection* may be associated with it as ideas.

As the number which expresses—

3. Difference.

It is very apt to connect itself with the thought of evil, whether moral or physical. Running through the grades of—

Diversity and contrast, it goes on to—

Contradiction, opposition, conflict, to *enmity*, and the *enemy's work.*

And evil comes out again, unmistakably, in the thought of—

Doublemindedness, duplicity, deceit.

It is also the *first number which divides*, and so stands for—

4. Division.

Which we may have as—

Separation. Here it may be related to knowledge as *analysis, differentiation, discernment;* and so *judgment, wisdom;* in an external manner, *sight.*

But *death* also is separation, dissolution.

Combining such thoughts as these, we shall easily find, as already said, how they cluster round the Person and work of Christ, the Second

Person of the Trinity, God and yet Man, the Second Man, the Word of God, the true Witness, the Saviour, come down into the inferior place, to be the Minister and Servant of our need, serving even to death for this, and that death the death of the Cross. All through, the number *two* links itself with this, which covers, it is plain, both His Person and His glorious work. How unlike are all these things to what we had under the first number! what contrasts are contained in them! But it is the number of contrast, and all speak of Him. Let the reader pause again and consider here how the Lord the True Witness, puts His seal on the numerical system in all this. There is nothing in it that is recondite or hard to follow, surely; nothing that is forced or unnatural. If it speak, and speak truly, after such a fashion as this, how much may we expect from the use which the Spirit of God has made of it.

Two is also, as I take it, the number of the *soul*, the emotional part of man's nature, as the spirit is the mental and moral. This I have elsewhere spoken of,* and it does not seem so much to concern us here.

It is also the number of the *woman*, full of contrasts, as she is: dependent on man, but his help-meet, the type of increase, yet through whom came sin and death, and yet again, through her victorious "Seed," salvation.

THREE.

When we come to the number three, the help of language fails, for man has penetrated indeed but a little way into the divine mysteries of the book of Nature. We have no words that express the inner meaning of this number, as "unity" and "seconding" speak for the former ones. Nevertheless we are not left without efficient help for ascertaining this.

Three, the number of the Spirit, is revealed to us, like the Spirit Himself, by the work it does. The Lord shows himself to us in it, not merely as Master of arithmetic, but as the One to whom geometry bears equal witness. There seem to be just three things which mark respectively three groups of meanings. The first is that there are three dimensions to every solid body; the second, that it takes three straight lines to enclose a space; the third, that the third line of a triangle returns to the first. Let us look at them in this order.

1.

According to the first of these, three is the symbol of cubic—that is, of solid measure; of *solidity*. Two dimensions give you a measure of surface only, length and breadth without thickness: but there is no such thing in fact: the thinnest line that you can draw upon paper is more than that.

Three is thus the symbol of *reality, realization; of fulfillment, fullness, of manifestation*, as the statue or the house manifests what is in the maker's

* "Spiritual Law in the Natural World," pp. 103, 109–113.

mind,—the telling out of the heart. Cubic measure is a measure not of surface, but of *content*.

As the place of divine manifestation, the *sanctuary*, God's dwelling-place, was a cube—of ten cubits in the tabernacle, twenty in the temple. So is the final city, which the glory of God lightens: "the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal."

The *glory* of God is but the manifestation of Himself; and "whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me," says the Lord Himself (Ps. l. 23): displays Him in His rightful character, as the "blessed God." To know Him really is to bless Him. *Praise* is thus the occupation of the sanctuary; not otherwise than freely, while and because necessarily.

God's *name*, too, is the manifestation of Himself.

The Trinity is alone His full manifestation. The Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, is He who manifests in the creature the counsels of God, whether in creation or in new creation.

2.

It is remarkable how the meanings under the second head run into the first, though reached in such a different manner. Here, if three straight lines enclose a space, the number will speak of separation from what surrounds, but not (as the last number,) of simple division. Like the enclosure of a field, it speaks of *setting apart for purpose, specialization*, which, if we apply it Godward, we know as *sanctification*, and in the spiritual result to be attained, as *holiness*. For, uniting the present with the former line of thought, let us remember that cubic measure is a measure of content and speaks of what is internal, as the Spirit's work is. Specialization means here therefore *transformation*, as in some sort it generally does: sanctification of heart is holiness. Thus we are reaching the sanctuary from another side, and have the symbolism of the number doubly witnessed to. Both sides are needed: for the manifestation of things, which only the presence of God rightly gives, realizes the "truth," the maintenance of which in its full character is holiness—the "holiness of truth" (Eph. iv. 24).

The sanctuary is *God's* dwelling-place; but as speaking of setting apart, the number is competent to symbolize the *dwelling place* in general, *possession, portion*, what is set apart to you. And so also of *marriage*, which is essentially the same idea.

The *ban*, too, we must remember, was in Israel the setting apart of holiness, though in destruction,—the sanctification of God in judgment; and we find this, therefore, sometimes under the same number that speaks of the glory and praise of God.

3

The third head is that which most evidently furnishes us with the symbol of resurrection,—the return of the third line of a triangle to the first. Here it is most striking that "life" comes under the first

number, "death" under the second, just as the first two sides separate from one another. In the third line then, symbolically, *death returns to life:* we have *resurrection.* We see why in Scripture it is on the third day. *Return, remembrance, recovery, revival* of every kind would be symbolized by it, of course, as fitly. One would suppose, *reproduction.*

And the triangle becomes as a whole a sort of mathematical trinity: the witness of how divine truth underlies every where the *Kosmos*—the ordered world.

That the Spirit of God, the Third Person of the Trinity, is borne witness to also in this number, there is no need to cite more than this in proof. But I may add that it is by the indwelling of the Spirit that our bodies are made the temples of the Holy Ghost, and the Church as a whole the "habitation of God."

FOUR.

That the first three numbers have this definite reference to the Persons of the Godhead, they being also all prime numbers, may prepare us to find in the following one the number of the creature, as in some sense it is generally, perhaps, taken to be. Its character is seen in this, that it is the first number that is *not* a prime: that is, it is the first number that is capable of division without remainder by some other than itself. Thus it speaks emphatically of *weakness*, which does not belong to God but to the *creature* in contrast with Him: of that which yields itself to be fashioned by the divine hand, and may yield itself, alas, to another. This *yieldingness* gives, I believe, the real significance of its symbolism whether good or evil.

In Scripture 4 divides thus in two ways; either as $3+1$, the number of manifestation and that of divine sovereignty (and this is the good sense, when the creature reveals the divine hand that is over it); or else by true division, 2×2, which seems to be invariably significant of evil.

Yieldingness may be on the part of man *meekness* or *mercy;* and the latter even on God's part.

It may be *failure* under *testing*, of which last also the number is clearly competent to remind us. But failure is the sign also of *transitoriness* and *change;* and testing, the putting to proof, leads to *experience*, experimental knowledge.

These various thoughts with which 4 connects show it to be the *world*-number: and in Scripture it is that of the "four corners of the earth," of *earthly* completeness and universality, which thus has on it the stamp of weakness, whatever men may boast. It is the number of the "four winds of heaven"— the various and opposing influences of which the earth is the scene, and which so depict the moral contrasts and opposition which mark the fallen creature's ways. These ways of the creature are but the *practical walk on earth;* which typically the fourth book of Scripture (Numbers) presents as to the people of God.

The connection with the number 2, of which it is the square, is seen all through, while yet it is sufficiently distinct from it.

FIVE.

In the cleansing of the leper and the consecration of the priest alike, the blood is put upon three parts of man: the tip of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, the great toe of the right foot; and these three parts manifest man in his responsibility to God. The ear is to receive His word; the hand to do the enjoined work; the foot to walk in His ways. Each of these parts is connected with the number 5.

The ear is one of five senses, the avenues of perception, by which as a rational being he can be appealed to.

The hand is that by means of which he moulds and fashions the natural world around him. It is the expression of active power, the four fingers with the opposing thumb, the consecrated, because the governing part. These on the two hands give ten, the number of the commandments in the two tables of the law, the measure of natural responsibility.

The foot, the expression of personal conduct (the walk) gives a similar division, much less marked, however, and the *two* feet a similar ten. Five stands thus as the number of man, exercised and responsible under the government of God.

Notice how carefully man's power is characterized as creature, dependent power. His hand is the sign of it as the vicegerant of God in the world: no beast has, in any proper sense, a hand. Yet the power is in no way like divine power,—simple and without effort, but a co-operation of forces, in which (as he recognizes) "union is strength;" the *four* fingers, every way significant of weakness, helped by the strong, opposing thumb; the two hands also assisting one another.

In perfect agreement with this, the Scripture commonly gives us 5 as 4+1, that is, man the creature in connection with God, his Ruler yet his Helper. Here the divine ways give him constant and needed exercise; and 5 will be found often associated with this thought of *exercise under responsibility;* and also with the kindred one, that man's *way* (4) under the control of God (1), according to its character leads to a corresponding *end.*

Capacity, as identified with responsibility, and leading thus to *recompense* are thus symbolized by the number 5: this as God's *governmental way*, implying necessarily *conditions.*

But man may be in relation to God other than governmental; and we shall find it not unfrequently spelling for us the blessed word "Immanuel," and pointing us directly once again to Christ.

It is plainly seen in all this how the significance of the lower numbers enters into the higher; and when we rise to

TEN.

We have only, so far as I can see, a 5×2, while—

FORTY.

The number of probation, is only 4×10, or $4\times(5\times2)$.

SIX.

Six is the second number capable of true division. Divided, its factors are 2 and 3, which easily yield the thought of the *manifestation* (or *fullness*) *of evil*, or of the enemy's work. But evil is weakness, as again this divisibility teaches; and as such it must yield to God. Read in a good sense, the number of conflict (2) brings forth from it sanctification and the glory of God (3).

It is the number of man's *work-day week*, the appointed time of *labor* for him, type of his life labor, his "few and evil" days, limited because of sin. It thus speaks plainly of *limit*, and of a limit which is God's *discipline*, because of sin,—His curb and victory over it. It speaks thus of mastery, *overcoming*.

In the "number of the beast" (666) we find it in three successively higher powers,—evil in fullest activity, yet its feebleness ever apparent, and God's hand controlling it: it increases only responsibility and judgment. It is but "the number of a man," vainly and impiously aspiring to be as God.

In the tenth Psalm is the description of this "wicked one" (vers. 2–11). It is, conjointly with the preceding one, an alphabetic psalm, from which in this place exactly *six* letters (*Mem* to *Tzaddi*) are dropped out.

Goliath's height is 6 cubits; a giant of his race has six fingers and six toes.

Nebuchadnezzar's idolatrous image is 60 cubits high and 6 broad.

One sixth of Gog's host is spared (Ezek. xxxix. 2.) That is, 6 parts are the spiritual measure of the host, of which God spares *one* in divine sovereignty.

Lastly, the darkness at the cross began at the sixth hour, and ended at the ninth (3×3)—God now fully displayed.

SEVEN AND TWELVE.

I put these numbers together because they are in some respects so much alike, and because in comparing them the character of each comes out the better.

Seven is well-known as the number of perfection and so of rest. But it may be applied to evil, and simply show "completeness" of any kind.

Twelve is in Scripture as commonly divided into 4×3 as seven is into $4+3$. The factors are the same; but, whereas in the one case they are added, in the other they are multiplied. Seven and twelve should

be, in some way therefore, allied in meaning. It is only in the *relation* of its factors that twelve differs from seven: * the number of the world and of divine manifestation characterize it; but these are not (as in 7) merely side by side. It is God manifesting Himself in relation to the world of His creation, as seven is, but now in active energy laying hold of and transforming it. Thus twelve is the number of manifest sovereignty as it was exercised in Israel, for instance, by the Lord in the midst of them, or as it will be exercised in the world to come.

"Turn now to the complete rest of the people of God—to the New Jerusalem, which has the glory of God, whose light God is, and the Lamb the lamp of it, to which the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple. Here perfection and rest are found, if anywhere, the thought connected, as abundantly plain, with seven: yet what do we find? Look at the foundations of the city: they are *twelve* in number. Look at the gates: there are *twelve* gates. Measure the city: its length, breadth and height are equal—*twelve* thousand furlongs each. Measure the height of the wall, 144 cubits,—12×12. Behold the tree of life planted by the river that issues from the throne of God: it bears *twelve* manner of fruits, and yields its fruit every month,—twelve times a year. Everywhere this number twelve meets us where we would expect to find the seven. It has the factors of seven; it is, as it were, the expansion of seven; and the spiritual idea that shines through it, that God is everywhere the manifest Ruler, what does it speak of to our hearts but that complete subjection to Him, which is indeed the perfection of the creature and its rest?"

The regular numerical series is here complete; the next number to seven,

EIGHT

simply showing that it *is* complete by indicating a new beginning, as the eighth day is the first of a new week. It thus speaks of what is *new* in contrast with the old, as the new covenant or the new creation. It will be noticed that this is closely akin to the meaning of two, and that eight is but the cube of two.

There is no difficulty with the number wherever we find it, except only that we must remember that here also the significance may be evil as well as good; and also that the overpassing of the week of time brings us to the commencement of eternity. Eight has not infrequently such a thought in it.

* "Spiritual Law in the Natural World," pp. 74, 75. The application of numbers to the interpretation of nature I have sought to give in the book quoted here.

APPENDIX III

THE NUMERALS IN RELATION TO THE SIX DAYS' WORK

IN its relation to nature the symbolism of numbers is a matter of the deepest interest. If it has, as we have seen, its roots in nature, and at the very basis of all arithmetic there is such a testimony to Christ as, I may venture to say, has been proved to exist, then it is hardly possible to believe that it ends with this, or that this is other than just a beginning of what must extend indefinitely throughout nature. Moreover to pursue such an investigation need not be alarming to those who most fear imagination. A bubble is not capable of being stretched very far, as every body knows; and the attempt to stretch it most surely ends in revealing its nature. The safe-guard as to imagination is to test it in every direction, and there is no test more severe than a mathematical one.

I propose, then, briefly to take up the six days' work as given in the first chapter of Genesis, to test the numerical structure more closely than has been done hitherto, with regard to the *natural facts themselves.* This has, as may be easily realized, its peculiar difficulties,—most of all, perhaps, in this, that the symbolism of the numbers gives us rather a *moral* than a physical vocabulary by which to interpret. I have been content therefore generally hitherto to apply it to the typical meaning which in all the six days' work is double, and affords a secure enough basis for application, especially as a concurrent natural one more or less appears.

But there is another thing to be taken into account also, as yet has not been done. . The days being expressly announced in order from the first to the seventh, these numbers must of course, remain for interpretation, as I have elsewhere used them. But besides this, it has been very generally noticed that the six days run into two parallel divisions, according both to subject and mode of arrangement: thus—

1st day—Light.	(1) 4th day—Lights.
2nd day—Waters dividing	(2) 5th day—Waters producing.
3rd day—Dry Land and vegetation.	(3) 6th day—Dry land producing, and man.

Here is an evident parallelism which must divide the 6 days into two parts, and give to the second part a second series of numbers also, as I have indicated. Both must find their place in the interpretation.

Dana in his well-known "Geology" remarks —

"In this succession we observe not merely an order of events, like that deduced from science; there is system in the arrangement, and a far-reaching prophecy, to which philosophy could not have attained, however instructed.

"The account recognizes in creation two great eras, each of three days,—an *Inorganic* and an *Organic*. * * *

"The last day of each era, included one work typical of the era, and another related to it in essential points, but also prophetic of the future. Vegetation, while for physical reasons a part of the creation of the third day, was also prophetic of the future organic era in which the progress of life was the grand characteristic. The record thus agrees with the fundamental principle in history, that the character of an age has its beginnings within the age preceding. So again, Man, while like other Mammals in structure, . . . was endowed with a spiritual nature, which looked forward to another era, that of spiritual existence."

Thus we have three great divisions,—including the Sabbath as a third: let us characterize them each numerically:—

1. (Chap. i. 1–13): *The reign of the inorganic.*

I do not say more than the *reign*, because of that with which it closes, the introduction of vegetable life. But how does the inorganic bear its numerical stamp? Plainly, because it is of simple, uniform constitution, not differentiated into organs. Thus Dana as a physicist has characterized it by what agrees fully with the numerical division.

But the second division will not be classed numerically as the "reign of the organic;" and this certainly would not characterize it in any proper way. "The progress of life" says Dana," was its grand characteristic." We can express it more fully and precisely every way, and numerically, as—

2. (Chap. i. 14–31): *The two-fold, active life, in progress towards the discernment characterizing man.*

"Two-fold"—not like the plant, but with life and soul; and thus "active"—the moving creature; this crowned finally, (not by evolution, but according to the plan and by the creative power of God,) with the "discernment" which is not the mere intuitive instinct of the beast, but the discriminating knowledge of the human spirit.

The third division, which consists of the seventh day alone, is simple:

3. (Chap. ii. 1–3): *The Sanctification of the Sabbath of rest.*

The numerical structure in each case seems to seize upon the central character, and define it sufficiently for its purpose. But let us go on now to the smaller divisions.

The account of the original creation of the heavens and earth shows

itself by the structure to be but an introduction, however necessary as that, to the six days' work. It does not belong to that work, yet cannot form a section apart, without throwing the rest of the chapter into disorder. It must come in with the first day, and there is most suited to the spiritual meaning as making the work of the first day a beginning of *restoration;* thus:—

1. (vers. 1–5): *Introduction and first day: light.*
   (i) *Original creation.*
   (ii) *The earth as it were in dissolution: darkness upon a deep.*
   (iii) *Restoration beginning with Light.*

The stamp of the God of resurrection is clearly upon this history at the beginning, and it is repeated every day in the common daily cycle as it is recorded, the "evening and the morning" being the day. Notice that the beginning of the first day is not *before* the light, but with it, or it could not begin with *evening:* for evening implies already light. But the light strangely comes only to fade and darken into night, through this to reach its morning by a new birth as it were, when (for that day, of course) the darkness is wholly past. How earnest is God to impress us with these spiritual lessons! Faith in all times has had to learn the ruin of the creature and the sole sufficiency of God; and that is what resurrection teaches. It is the end seen from the beginning: the final lesson written on the first page of the book.

We are here too much at the beginning of things to reason as to them in their physical aspect, which is what we are just now concerned with. Why light should be the first thing in *physical* restoration we may have no means of knowing, while the spiritual meaning is clear enough. If there is indeed that deep sympathy in the natural with the spiritual, upon which all our belief in analogy is based, then we have in this what may commend the history as true in such respect, and suggest a means of insight even into nature itself, which has had at present (as I think) no advocates. It may not the less merit consideration.

"Light," it will be seen, comes under two numbers, 1 and 3, and does not seem as if it could be spared from either. The meanings of the numbers can in fact each be given in terms of the other with reference to it: for "that which doth make *manifest* is light," and it is thus a *source of knowledge.* This may justify its double place according to the spiritual meaning, and so justify it really; for the spiritual is that which governs everywhere in Scripture. Yet it must also be a canon of all true interpretation that no spiritual interpretation can set aside the text which it interprets, and the text here is physical. Plainly then light as making manifest would seem as yet not to be called for, when there were no eyes yet to be blessed by it, as there are not till the fifth day.

When we remember, however, that light is not merely what we call by that name, but in fact a *trinity* of light, heat, and actinism, or power for chemical change, for this, if we cannot trace it, we can easily infer a

meaning in connection with the next step in the preparation of the earth to be the home of life, the making of the expanse or firmament.

Thus a physical meaning may well underlie the spiritual one, and light in its triune character answer to the third place in which we find it here as an active agent in the restoration just beginning.

But we must go on to the second day, in which we find the formation of the expanse by which the waters are divided. Two is the number both of progress and increase (and so of expansion), and also of division; and thus the numerical stamp is fully upon the second day.

All this seems at first sight to be purely phenomenal; but, if we consider it more deeply, does it not point to some adjustment, if no more, of those laws of the *expansion* and diffusion of gases, which are among the most remarkable and important for the needs of every living and breathing thing? While the division of the waters is of course that which provides for the water-supply of the dry land next to come into existence. This is all obvious enough to be perhaps even common place as a suggestion; but if so, does it not show that the numerical structure, which emphasizes just such central points as these, has a real physical as well as spiritual significance?

Upon the third day, the earth is separated from the waters, and we have the beginning of organic life in the plant, the link with the next division. Both these things bear upon them very plainly the numerical stamp.

As to the earth, it is the *habitable* earth, man's future dwelling-place, *set apart* from the waters which had ingulfed it, and thus in true *resurrection*. The number of its section—of the day itself—is fully set upon it.

Then as to the vegetable life, three is the number of specialization, of setting apart for specific purpose, which organization so fully exemplifies. Besides which, as I have elsewhere shown,* there are *three* organic kingdoms in nature, of which the vegetable stands *third;* man, by virtue of the spirit with which he is endowed, standing first; and the animal, the mere "living soul," the second. The vegetable occupies the third place among these as the great *transformer* of the inorganic into the organic; while the animal reduces again the organic to the inorganic. The vegetable is the producer, as the animal is the consumer.

Another thing which is specially noticed in the account, and which would seem to come under this number is the phenomenon of *reproduction*. All living things must of course reproduce themselves, if life is to continue on the earth; for as a fact death comes in with life. Thus "its seed in itself" is characteristic.

Thus the numerical structure is justified all round: for these matters to which it directs our thoughts are not points of slight importance, but which have direct and essential relation to the account before us, which

* "Spiritual Law in the Natural World," p. 99.

is in fact that of the preparation of the earth for man. Let this be duly weighed, and the argument for the symbolism of the numbers will be convincing.

But we have not closed the account of the third day: we have yet to consider numerically these two divisions of it as such.

The *first* seems to refer to the gathering together of the waters into *one place*, by which in fact the dry land was laid bare. It naturally raises the question whether the land was elevated, or by the opening of interior receptacles in the earth the waters were drained off: a point which it certainly is not for us to take up here. The word of the Creator seems to imply action upon the waters, rather than upon the land; but of the import of the whole question we have too little knowledge to venture anything.

As to the *second*, we have not the same clue in the language; but *growth*, which is characteristic of the living thing, comes under the number; and if the transforming power of the cell is the fundamental thing in it, there must be *growth* as the immediate consequence of this, and for anything beyond the mere cell-unit. The cell must be reproduced; and the *addition* of material is followed by *division* in order to effect this. If tissue is to be formed, this is done by transformation once more of the newly formed living matter into it; in which that which has begun to live gives up its life, the protoplasm or bioplasm as it has been variously called "*dies into*"—so Dr. Beale expresses it—the formed material of the tissue, membrane or bone or muscle.

So hard does death follow upon life! and yet so really also does it minister to it. Weighty lessons to reach so early in our Nature primer!

But notice how in "growth," "addition," "division," "death," we are taking up the ideas expressed under the number two of the subdivision; and notice that as "transformation" and "reproduction" are the inherent powers of organic life, "growth," "division," "death" are *modes of their accomplishment.* Thus the numbers appear throughout; and while that of the division gives the governing principle, the modes are given in the subdivision! Is this system or what is it? Aye, what? For the first subdivision of this third day follows the same rule: gathering of the waters into one place is just the *mode* by which the dry land is produced! I leave to the reader to decide what all this may mean or not mean.

But we have only reached half-way through the six days' work, and in the second division the numerals are doubled, as we have seen. In this way they are more exacting in their requirements, but if intended as helps and verification of interpretation there must be more than compensation in the result attained. Let us go on then carefully and hopefully to consider what is still before us.

Here though life in its progress is, as we have seen, the great theme of the division, we have yet an introduction which does not take up this, though it is a preparation for it. The fourth day with its "lights" is

here the analogue of the "light" of the first. These two numbers, then, 4 and 1, are what we have to consider in reference to this day.

The number 1 speaks naturally, as in the former case, of light upon the earth as the great subject: and this is plainly stated to be so: "God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth."

The number 4 is that of the earth, eminently of matter, as passive, recipient, thus would remind us of the bodies to which the light is attached, making them "luminaries." Thus both numbers are significant and point together to what no one can fail to see to be the central feature of the fourth day.

But the number 1 is the number of *rule* also; and here sun and moon are especially appointed to be respectively the rulers of the day and of the night. As the result, upon these now depend the alternations of light and of darkness, and the seasons—here first named. Four, let us remember, is the number that speaks of *transitoriness* and *change*, which naturally point here to the "seasons." But the seasons are dependent upon the *rule* of sun and moon: so that the 4 and the 1 come for the second time together. Surely there is some meaning in all this.

These changing seasons, while they affect all living things, have yet plainly their chief significance for God's responsible creature, man, so soon now to appear upon the scene, and thus the word "signs" precedes "seasons" in the command given. The earth being dependent upon heaven in the way it is, it could not but be that man would seek the significance of all appearances in sun and moon; with which the stars would soon come to be conjoined. By all these he would learn his littleness and his dependence, as we find in an exaggerated form and turned to evil, as he turned away from God, in his wide-spread worship of the heavenly bodies. Their power for evil shows their power for good; upon which it is not here for me to dwell. It is enough here to point out how plainly all this heralds the near approach of man, and the tender interest shown by God in His creature. Purpose of love is read in the Scripture physics from the beginning; and the book of Scripture opens for us the book of Nature with lessons for the heart.

But to come now to the fifth day, which is also the second of the second series: the numbers 5 and 2 are those therefore which have now to be considered in relation to the work of this day, the introduction of animal life. But two, as has elsewhere been shown,* is the number of the animal kingdom or simple "living soul," above which man is raised by his possession of spirit. The "soul" in Scripture is the seat of that emotional, appetitive, instinctive life, which needs for its full development the guidance and control of that intelligent, moral nature, which in man is joined to it. This dependent nature of the beast suits the place for which it was ordained, of subjection to man, which in the domestic animals we find them filling, and which, spite of the fall, the wild beast it-

* "Spiritual Law in the Natural World," pp. 109–113.

self recognizes still to a large extent. The full meaning of it now we can hardly realize.

The soul as the motive, emotional faculty full of the unreasoning contrasts which we find in passion, comes fully under this number two. But in its relation to *instinct* proper, it seems to transcend this. Instinct, within a certain range, does, as we know, the work of *mind*, more promptly and satisfactorily than mind itself will do it. Reason will pause, waver, get perplexed and blunder, where instinct will at a dash and almost unfailingly accomplish its end. If it were mind, it were a higher mind than man's; and yet man's mind rectifies its mistakes and rises above instinct, and into spheres into which it is impossible for this to enter. The wisdom of the beast in its lower sphere seems more divine than that of man, which has marked upon it in its readiness to err, the creatureliness which is for him so wholesome an admonition. The beast, in fact, as having no personality to distract it, acts from its own God-given nature, unperverted by the fall; and laws of nature have, as we all realize, the same character of promptness, certainty and effectiveness which we recognize in the instinct of the beast. Its Maker has (as we may reverently say) the responsibility of its actions in a way that cannot be said of man with his free persouality: hence it is *necessarily*, what man should be freely, weakness which withal testifies of an energy beyond itself. And this is just what would be covered by the number 5, which, as 4 and 1, speaks of creature weakness allied with divine strength. This as applied to man suggests of necessity *responsibility* as we have elsewhere seen, while in the beast it would speak only of an energy which wrought in it beyond its own.

Thus the 5 and the 2 unite here, as previously the numbers of the fourth day, just to point out the central feature of the work accomplished. A perfect system seems to develop itself in these numbers, which should induce us to inquire more earnestly into it; and which in Moses manifests a mind beyond Moses,—is a mark of inspiration which will turn the keenest-eyed of critics most of all, as that, into the adoring worshipper.

There is more than this, one may feel sure, as to the meaning of the fifth day's work, but I do not possess the competence to utter it. Let us go on to the sixth day, which is the third of the second series: where again the numbers are manifest. Notice, throughout, that there is no possibility of *manipulating* any of these, no choice at all which can be exercised with regard to them. We are rigorously shut up to these and none but these. If imagination is permitted, it is restricted within the narrowest limits: and this, for the purpose we have before us, is what is most of all to be desired.

On the sixth day, as on the third, we have a double work: the *earth* bringing forth the living soul, as on the fifth day the water did; now the land-animal; and after this man is made in the image of God.

As to the first part of the work, the land-animal, I can, I fear, say very little to the purpose. The living soul is introduced on the fifth day, and there characterized: as such it is not distinctive here. Of the three classes "cattle" might seem to suit the number of discipline; but of the "creeping things" we do not seem to have a clearly defined idea; while "the beast of the earth," said to be the more freely moving wild beast, is not by this either much more fully defined. They are all beasts of the earth, in the sense of moving upon it, and the "cattle," put first, shows that the definitions here are not in the way of zoological classification, while the thought of relation to man is prominent if not ruling.

As to the creation of man we can happily see more clearly. What is said of him is that he is "created in the image of God, as His likeness:" in some sort the reflection of Himself. The word "created" is very important; for it shows that the "image of God" does not refer, as many have thought, to the sovereignty man was to exercise over the earth, but that it was inherent in his very constitution. And it shows more than this: it enables us to say definitely in what it consists. For the word "created" is used as a different thing from simple "making," and implies the bringing forth of some new element of being, not involved in former production. Thus it is used in this chapter in regard to the original creation of heaven and earth, not of anything merely material afterward. It is used next of the introduction of the "living soul," *soul* being such a new element. And next it is used here, where in man *spirit* is added to soul. If this be really so, then *spirit* is that which is really the image of God in man.

Scripture confirms this from every side. For "God is a Spirit," and the "Father of spirits." (Jno. iv. 24; Heb. xii. 9). Had it said "souls," the beast is also a soul; but "the *spirit* of man which is in him" is that by which alone human things are known (1 Cor. ii. 11). It is the intelligent and moral part. Here then is manifestly what is necessary to the image of God; and if "we are His offspring" (Acts xvii. 28) then we can understand how as "Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image" (Gen. v. 3), man too can be said to be brought forth—only here it is creation, and the child is but a creature,—in the image of God.

Out of this comes indeed his capacity for the place into which he is immediately put, as the vicegerent of God upon earth: "Let us make man in our image, as our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

The word for "have dominion" is *radah*, "let them tread down" or "subdue:" implying a dominion to be maintained with power, and the moulding of those subject to him to his will. Thus we find in the next chapter that Adam is put into the garden, "to dress it and to keep it;"

and the mention of "cattle" in the present one implies the same thing. There was yet no existing evil; but here were plastic natures for him to mould and convert to fullest use. While the need of this would be for himself such needed discipline—if we may yet use such a word—such training by exercise, if that be fitter, as would call out in himself the vigilance and carefulness suited to one under needful trial, and liable to temptation.

These then are the main features of the sixth day's work as to man; and here it is not hard again to trace the fitness of the numbers. *Three* is the number of reproduction, perhaps of reflexion, and shows us man in the image and likeness of God. *Six* is the number of mastery and of discipline; that which springs out of his being alone in God's image, and in relation to the earth on which he is placed. Thus again the numbers have the most fitting and beautiful relation to the subject in hand.

As to the two divisions of the sixth day as such,—their relation to these first two numbers,—I can only give what suggests itself to me, and something of the mode by which I reach it, that it may be the better tested by those who put things to the test. The lack of clearness as to the first division of necessity occasions difficulty.

In the first place, it would seem likely that the two divisions, the beast of the earth and the man, are here exhibited in contrast with one another. Contrast there is necessarily, and the number 2 speaks often of this, especially where we have, as here, two as the whole measure of what is before us.

What is before us is something characteristic of the beast and of the man respectively. As we know the man best, it is natural to turn first to him; and here, if we consider how he is presented to us as one in the image of God, His offspring, we must think of this link with God as being the great contrast between man and beast. Two, the number of this section that speaks of man, may naturally, therefore, suggest *fellowship*,—that fellowship for which the beast is totally inapt. He can look up into the face of God, listen and respond to Him. A wondrous privilege and dignity, which has not as yet been pointed out to us, but which is based upon that which *has* been pointed out: that which comes first has been put first, and now we have the inference which is to be noted from it.

On the other hand, the beast's life is in this respect *alone*, nay, we may say, *barren*. He has on this account no link with eternity; he is but the beast that perishes. Neither desire nor thought in him craves anything better; and death is to him no shadow, no perplexity. Thus he fills evidently the numerical place assigned him; and I see no other way in which he could fill it. The number one as applied to him seems to point absolutely in this direction alone. The method of exclusion may be here permitted to the argument; though it only furnish as to it the smallest part.

This examination may not be unfitting as an appendix to the book of Psalms, which has in it such constant references to nature, and indeed to the first of Genesis. It should confirm us in the conviction of how important a place the numerals have in Scripture, and encourage us as to their application in the field of nature also. They are open books put into our hand by the same divine Teacher: would only that there were more to pursue their deeper study in that faith in the perfectness of all His work, which alone will give us the profit of such labor.

APPENDIX IV

A PLEA FOR THE POSSESSING OURSELVES OF ALL GOD'S REVELATION

"I HAVE more understanding than all my teachers," says the psalmist enthusiastically, "for Thy testimonies are my meditation." The Christian can surely not think him too emphatic. That is the voice of the disciple; but it is the voice of the Master that has said: "Search the Scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they that testify of Me."

In their own line, therefore, every believer recognizes that they are absolutely unique. Not all the books that have ever been produced in all the ages of human history outside of them are equal even to the small dust of the balance when weighed against these.

It is well to remember in such days as ours, that it was of the Old Testament, and almost certainly of only *part* of the Old Testament that the writer spoke. As it was of the Old Testament also that the apostle spoke when he reminded Timothy that from a child he had "known the holy Scriptures; which are able," he adds, "to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Christ Jesus." How small a part of what we have to-day was the wisdom for which the psalmist disclaimed in comparison all that the world beside could show!

But this is not now what I intend to take up or speak about. I am not writing for those that would contest it. In their own line, it is admitted, let us say, that the Scriptures are unique. I would yet propose the question,—and it will be by no means so readily or unanimously answered, even by the Christian,—what is then "their own line?" How far does this unique value of theirs extend? Supposing we desire to use the Bible fairly, and (as given of God,) for all for which He gave it, how could we define this? is it not desirable to do so? at least to have some practical idea of how to use it, if not an absolute definition?

If God had meant by Scripture only to teach us the way to heaven, or, along with this, how to live a good life here (and this, I suppose, is

pretty much the definition that would be adopted by the many) the first thing that would naturally occur to any one thinking seriously about it, would be that the Bible is a very large book and a very strange book, on this view of the matter.

It is a very large book: for it surely does not take so many words to tell us the way to heaven: and any one that knows the gospel knows well (and thank God that it is so) that a very few texts will suffice to show this with the most absolute clearness. As to the living a good life here, the simplest way to show us this would be in something like the ten commandments, with applications to suit the varied circumstances of life; or, if that were too legal, a *catalogue raisonné* of Christian principles.

Scripture on the face of it is not at all like this. Though there are blessed statements of the gospel, as we very well know, and many a page of Christian exhortation, yet these are not put together as we might imagine they would be, and they are mixed with much else and various matter very different from all this. Things are not so definitely stated that there should be no possible mistake about them, as witness the conflict of Christian men over their meaning. What a help to a common understanding would be at least a divine summary of faith and practice, such as the various churches have adopted and which for this purpose they find so useful. But then these articles of faith *separate:* they are but the expression after all of the judgment of a section of Christendom; suppose there had been given us by divine inspiration as plain a creed as any of these, would it not have united instead of scattering us? if the Westminster Confession had been written by apostles instead of theologians of the seventeenth century, would we not have all subscribed it? and would not Arminianism have been effectively excluded from the minds of all honest-minded and believing men?

But such help as this it has not pleased God to give us; and we have to hunt up even texts upon any given subject—not always sure even that we have got the right ones—from every part of Scripture! Does not God care for the poor? Does He not know the dullness of our minds at best, the multifarious occupations that we have to be engaged in, the trouble and anxiety caused by our many differences, the darkness in which true-hearted saints grope often after His will, the tendency we have on account of all this, to follow the men who will do our thinking for us, and in whom in some way or other we have concluded to put confidence?

Yes, surely: all this and more God knows; and, knowing it, has written Scripture as He has, a book so large, so various, so needing to be searched, *studied;* so certain to exercise *most* the most careful, earnest, conscientious, God-fearing. His thought then for us, whatever it may be, is not to save us from thought,—not to let us off from the necessity of labor for what we get from it. It was not to a class of theological stu-

dents, but to men so poor that they could follow Him for the loaves with which He fed them, that He said: "Labor *not* for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you." (John vi. 27.) Notice, therefore, that this applies not merely to the more hidden things of the Old Testament, but to the plain speech of the New as well, that it calls for labor—for more earnest and untiring labor than our daily food does; and that not from a special class of selected, capable workmen, but from *all* who need and desire such spiritual food.

Evidently the Lord distinguishes the thing that is to be labored after in the way He does in order to challenge our interest by the exceeding importance of it. "Meat that endureth to everlasting life" is a very significant title indeed, and one that we shall do well if we seek to realize what we can of the depth of its meaning. I have seen it interpreted as signifying "food that will give you entrance into everlasting life,"—by which you will become possessors of it: and that is true enough as a thought, and afterwards affirmed also: "he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever." It is a true thought in itself, and a thing justly worthy of all the emphasis that can be put upon it. And yet, if that were all, for the Christian, who has already the possession of eternal life, the urgency of the exhortation would necessarily pass out of it. *He* is not to be persuaded that he needs labor to get what he has already got, or to keep what it is as certain he can never lose.

Here too, it may be pleaded that the Lord is actually speaking to men who were not believers; but it is plain all the way through the chapter that there were disciples also among them, while in the open synagogue He is not hindered from speaking of such things and in such a way as to test disciples themselves. Here in seeking to attract men to Himself He might, as with the woman of Samaria, speak of things the depth of which they would not yet be able to penetrate, and yet of what they would understand to be a blessing set before them; and those who sought it would not be stumbled to find at last greater than at first they had realized.

After all, the truth itself is not so difficult to conceive, and the Lord's words to the Samaritan are strictly parallel. To her He speaks of "living *water* springing up unto eternal life," and under this figure of the Spirit's presence, permanent and operative ever, not to bring one into life, but throughout it. So here with the bread of life, the living bread, it too abides unto eternal life, in opposition to the "meat that perisheth." Not only the life is eternal, but all that ministers to it partakes of the same eternity. Christ abides, and abides as the unfailing support of a life which though eternal is dependent too, and which never ceases to realize its dependence.

An image of this, and to which the Lord also, in His epistles to the churches, refers us, was that "hidden manna," which was preserved in

the golden pot and carried into the land, the type of our glorious heritage, that the children of Israel might *see* the food with which Jehovah had fed them in the wilderness. (Ex. xvi. 32.) Thus the food of the wilderness *abode*, but abode simply as a memorial, to be seen. To the overcomer at Pergamos on the other hand, the promise is: "I will give him of the hidden manna" (Rev. ii. 17): he shall partake of it, not simply *see* it. Christ as enjoyed in the wilderness shall be enjoyed afresh in the glorious land to which we are going: more perfectly, surely, for all shall be perfect there, and yet, let us mark it well, the very wilderness-food itself. For the manna is Christ in His humiliation, and in heaven He is no longer in humiliation, yet it is the hidden manna of which the saint in heaven still partakes.

A serious consideration presses upon one here, that, if this be the food partaken of,—and since one cannot call up again the wilderness-condition, save in memory,—he who has not had the wilderness experience cannot have the repetition of it in heaven: *he cannot recall what he has never known*. Thus, too, there must be some correspondence between the measure of apprehension of Christ here and the measure of *such* apprehension of Christ there. Take an angel's knowledge: it could not in this respect be the knowledge of the redeemed from among men. There is no sin in the angel, and it is not sin that limits his view; nay, his very freedom from it—his never having had the experience of it—would be a necessary limitation. And so would it be with the babe, only coming into the world to be taken out of it. The perfecting of its faculties in another scene would not give it experiences of a state in which it had never been.

Perfecting of experiences that we have had is, of course, another thing. This there will surely be: for we shall look back with eyes purged from the films of earth, and with memories that will themselves be perfected. But the knowledge will still be measured—finite, not infinite; and with limitations, whatever may be the enlargement of its scope.

If Christ then be the "meat that endureth unto everlasting life," and the manna so laid up must be manna gathered here, how important must this gathering of the manna be! Surely there can be no "meat that perisheth" to be compared with it; and one can no longer wonder at being called to seek it with proportionate earnestness.

Now it is Scripture that is to give us this knowledge of Christ, though of course there is in Christ more than can be justly spoken of as manna. This will not make Scripture of less importance to us surely. Christ it is that is the knowledge of the "new man," and Christ is "*all*" that knowledge. (Col. iii. 11.) God has "predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He may be the First-born among many brethren." (Rom. viii. 29.) The "edifying of the body of Christ" also is "till we all come unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of

the fullness of Christ." (Eph. iv. 13.) We are *now* growing up to this; and for this it is that the word of God is given to us, not simply that we may be saved, or even live here a life of piety and good works, but to form in us the mind of Christ, that "we may grow up unto Him in all things." (ver. 15.) No wonder Scripture is as large, therefore, as it is: communion with God, though we talk quietly enough about it, yet if it be realized in the depth and fullness of its meaning, how immense a thing it is! Communion with God, realized in this way would be nothing less than sharing all His thoughts as He has revealed them to us; thoughts which have Christ as centre and circumference; for "all things were created by Him and for Him." (Col. i. 16.)

Here then is what we are called to enter into: here is a field to be worked which will call for all our faculties in all their energy to be engaged with. God does not tell us that it is easy work: how could it be? *delightful* work it is, and that increases all the energy that it demands. But it requires that we yield ourselves unreservedly to it, subordinating everything else to God's great purpose with regard to us. Christ must come to fill the whole range of our vision; but, so filling, to enlarge and rectify and illumine it with divine glory.

Here the nature of man finds what it craves, and expands in all parts and in equal proportions. Mind, heart and conscience develop together. Scripture, while it makes men of might, produces no monsters: no men of intellect without heart; no conscience urging one to self-devised torment; and yet no self-complacent egotism either: "I live, not I," says one who is without question a competent witness to us; "but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. ii. 20.)

This is not simply doctrine, nor even faith in a doctrine. A glorious truth underlies it, but this is more; it is the apprehension of the truth, and the experience which flows from it. He who spoke this had accepted what Christ had done for him, the death in which he himself for faith had died, and which enabled him to turn away from himself, the man down here, to the One with whom he was now identified before God, and with whom he had in the joy of his heart accepted identification.

His old life had ended therefore: he was now a man *in Christ;* though realizing that there was still upon earth a "self" in which he could not glory, save in the infirmity which made him conscious of the need, —a need continually met as realized,—"that the power of Christ should rest upon" him. (2 Cor. xii. 5, 9.) This for the pursuit of Christ's interests on earth to whom he belonged, while, beholding Him above, he was "changed into His image" (chap. iii. 18.)

I believe that a most false and limited idea of the design of Scripture is shutting masses of Christian people out of the very desire to possess themselves of what our gracious God has given them in it. It is a book larger by far than they have any use for. To find salvation and to live a good life on earth, these are the ends they have before them, and

which they suppose to be all that God has in His mind for them. But for these ends, I say again, Scripture is too large; I may say boldly, it is *very much* too large. Did they think that they had any particular responsibility about it, they would perhaps even be distressed to know what to do with it all. As it is they read it more or less, perhaps conscientiously all through, but with a languid interest in much of it at best, and with a wonder which they scarcely like to admit, why it should have been written.

Of *searching* it for themselves, save certain parts, they know very little. They get light here and there upon it through others, and read books, if they are not too deep. They have really no thought that what God means by it all is to form in them the mind of Christ—to give them fellowship with Himself—to train them for co-heirship with His Son; and that all this means not a little need of teaching, not a little exercise, as well as the disciplinary dealings of His hand by the way;—"*exercised* to discern both good and evil,—"suffering that they may reign with Him."

To accomplish this the word of God is not too large; though that of course, does not imply but that it will always be beyond us. It is plain that He means us to be busy with it,—would not let us off thinking,—would not leave any vacuity with us for the thorn and thistle-seed always floating in the air, to plant themselves in and spring up. To His people of old He spoke earnestly about this: "And these commandments that I command thee to-day shall be in thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them as a sign upon thy hands, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes; and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house and upon thy gates" (Deut. vi. 6–9). All this implies a constant keeping the words of God before themselves and others, constant confession of them and meditation upon them. And how thoroughly a saint of old could respond to this, the delight he could have in it, and the fruit he could find, the 119th Psalm alone is sufficient to assure. Is it to be supposed that God would have us less fully occupied or give us less joy or profit from the occupation?

The whole heart also, if it be this we bring to it, needs the whole Word. How could it do less than this, if only because God has given it? Has *He* misjudged our need, or put upon us useless labor? Certainly He does not mean to have it drudgery for us, nor does He give us mere chaff to thresh out for the granary. If there be what may seem strange to be from Him, would He not have us inquire the more because of its strangeness? If we seem sometimes to be laying up useless store, we should find, if we keep it long enough, occasion for it. We have (if we are Christians) the Spirit of God as our Teacher; and He,

let us remember, "searcheth the deep things of God." (1 Cor. ii. 10). If the heart is only enough engaged, and the throne of grace is yet accessible, we need not despair of learning because things are "deep."

I have found too that one of the most fruitful causes of not understanding or *mis*understanding a portion of Scripture is just the lack, as the man of science would say, of a *perfect induction.* That is to say, something—perhaps obvious enough—has escaped me. It was there, but I was too careless, too much in a hurry,—perhaps too doubtful of being able to find any meaning—actually to find it. The key too may be some distance off, and in a part I have not read or remembered. Hence the necessity of storing the mind with Scripture. It is all valuable—*too* valuable yet perhaps, for me to appreciate, just as a savage might have no use for a sewing-machine. Let us be assured that in Scripture there is nothing barren or unprofitable anywhere.

The *whole* Word, then; and all to be honestly thought upon and sought into. But even so, we have not got all the riches God designs for us. There is the great book of Nature, wide open, and inviting us by its appeal to all our senses. Here again, if we have minds that *work*, we shall find what will give them full activity. "Too much," perhaps, you may say; "there is no end to it." No, truly: no end to all God's wonders, nor to the riches He has spread around us.

But here, also, is a field which has been much worked of late in man's interests, and he is very proud of what he has done in it. It has for the most part to do with a world which has been put under the dominion of man, as meant for his use, and he has only lately begun to find how rich is his inheritance.

But God has taken care, also, that this world with which man has so much to do should be full of witness to His power who is above him, as well as the love that has strewn this munificence around him: a witness he can never lose, never escape. It shines upon him from the lights of the spangled sky above him; it breathes in the whisper of the gentle breeze around, which before night may have increased to a hurricane; the various voices of the day and night preach it in melody and in dissonance: and everywhere man has acknowledged this witness to be divine, and worshiped.

Scripture has brought nigh God and perfected this witness. In the mirror of Nature every spiritual truth has its reflection; and these images appear throughout Scripture and become the familiar language in which its doctrines are conveyed. In the New Testament the Creator Himself is declared to be the Word—thus the Revealer—of God, and creation therefore by implication to be a revelation. God's witness is twofold; and on the face of heaven and earth Scripture again is written out in incorruptible signs that may be appealed to. Not in vain, surely, has God done this: He can still "call to the heavens and to the earth

that He may judge His people" (Ps. l. 4.); and rebuke the unbelief which uplifts itself against Him in the very face of such tokens.

Now, if Christ be indeed the One by whom and for whom all things were created, it is only the one to whom Christ has become what we see He was with the apostle, who can be at the centre of any branch of knowledge. All roads must lead to Him. The spiritual must everywhere underlie the natural, give meaning to it, make it really what it is meant to be, clothe it with the power that should belong to it. No science but must run into theology. All the analogies of nature become but witnesses of this inner reality, without the knowledge of which the *savant* and scientist becomes indeed but a pitiful agnostic; all his utterances but broken fragments of sentences,—the stammerings of infirmity and impotence itself.

And if this be true, what must be the value of Scripture, what must be its comprehensiveness? what field of knowledge will you shut off from it? what shall we think, for instance, of the so readily accepted dictum, that Scripture was not intended to teach science? and which is meant—not to assert of it that it is infinitely *beyond* a mere primer or text-book of science, but—to rule it out as incompetent in this sphere, as without help or authority as regards the visible, and to relegate it to the sphere of the invisible alone.

The effect is that as to the immensity of nature round us we may think what thoughts we please, unhindered by anything in Scripture. Guesses we may have, and theories, and "working hypotheses" *ad libitum*, which even palpable self-contradictions shall not destroy,* and they must not be even limited by any intrusion of the divine. Thus practically we get a world—yea, a universe as far as man has explored it—Christless, if not godless; to which Scripture, with its old-time child-notions of miracles and a God nigh at hand, is in plain opposition.

Take the common theory of evolution in proof of this. It has been lately said of it that "Whatever differences of opinion as to this theory may still exist, few naturalists can feel reluctant to acquiesce in Wallace's statement that 'Darwin did his work so well that descent with modification is now universally accepted as the order of nature in the organic world.'"†

Now, if this be so, open your Bibles at the second chapter of Genesis, and ask yourself how on the principle of "descent with modification" Eve could have have been by any possibility *evolved out of Adam!* That is evidently not in the order of nature: it is the exact opposite of it; it is miracle and nothing else. Apply to it the slow successive changes demanded by Darwinism, and the absurdity is heightened at every step; but the absurdity is there at the beginning in the male producing

* See as to Ether and the Wave-Theory of Light, Prof. J. P. Cooke's "Credentials of Science the Warrant of Faith," pp. 223, *seq.*

† Prof. Calderwood: "Evolution and Man's Place in Nature," p, 1.

the female for the continuance of the race. It is not even the poetry some have claimed for it. It is simply absurdity, or miracle and divine truth.

Let us take our stand then with Scripture, or give it up: compromise is impossible. If the account of creation is not true, Scripture opens with falsehood in its face. It asserts knowledge of what only revelation could make known; or else gives conjecture, and then how much else of the same sort follows it, who shall say?

In fact the history has been amply safe-guarded. I venture to say that the proofs of divine inspiration in it can challenge the world to refute them; and thank God, the evidence is of a sort as accessible to the non-scientific as to the scientific mind. If it can be shown that according to the Genesis account the story of the restoration of the earth out of its "waste and desolate" condition is but the symbolic picture of the restoration of the same earth *morally* to God, as history and prophecy combine to picture it;—a picture also of the restoration of an individual *soul* to God, but in terms which we have to go to the New Testament to make clear to us;—if we can show a numerical symbolism running through the whole, uniting the physical, dispensational and individual aspects of the history together, and uniting itself to a symbolic numerical structure running through other parts of Scripture;—then assuredly we have a threefold cord which shall not be broken, binding it into a wondrous whole which can only be from God. This has been already done in measure,* but deserves to be done in a much more thorough and painstaking way. The whole is a many-linked proof of the underlying of the natural by the spiritual of which I have already spoken, and of which every parable in Scripture speaks, to which every one of those analogies of which we all so confidently and as it were instinctively avail ourselves, bears witness.

This analogy, if it be real,can be used also in another and a reverse way from that in which we usually employ it: a fact which deserves the most attentive consideration. If the spiritual and the natural run thus in parallel lines, why should we not trace the *natural by means of the spiritual*, as well as the spiritual by means of the natural? Take, for instance, once more, the first chapter of Genesis. If it be indeed a picture of either the soul or the world being restored to God, then we cannot possibly miss what is here so plain, that this restoration implies a fall having taken place, which the waste and desolate condition of the earth, darkness upon the face of the deep, so strikingly symbolizes. May we not see in it, then, *physically*, a lapsed condition of the earth, the effect of some cataclysmic overthrow, instead of the condition in which it was originally created, as many believe? This can be proved, I am

* See "Genesis in the Light of the New Testament;" "Numerical Bible," vol. i. notes; and the last "Appendix."

sure, otherwise; but that therefore proves that such a conclusion would, in this case, lead us aright. Would it not in every case in which the grounds of the conclusion were as plain as this?

But if so, again how valuable must Scripture be for the knowledge of Nature! It should be in every way the firm ground of the naturalist, and induction be here as reliable as that directly from nature; the microscope also being as great a revealer in one case as in the other. Ah, how little patient, believing work has been done in this direction with regard to Scripture: a neglect which has shut us out so much from the light it could have given, just in the very matters hidden from the mere man of science. The beginnings of things and their points of connection with the unseen, are things largely thus hidden: how good would it be to have all the light that Scripture can give thrown into those dark inmost recesses of the constitution of things. What a thing it would be to have a faithful company of devout explorers giving themselves to explore nature with the light of Scripture, and Scripture also, one may reverently say, in the light of nature. For both are God's books and both alike truthful, and Christ the theme of and the key to both.

"The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." In every corner of it He is to be found; upon every part of it His Name stands written. Oh for the students that shall make His glorious sanctuary their college, and see in nature that which only the anointed eye can see, and hear the worship of the things we call inanimate, but through which the Life of life is pulsating everywhere.

If we desire this, we must bring the word and the work of God together in a way that yet, it seems to me, we nowhere see. It seems almost as if we had here believed that we had the incompatible service of two masters, to one of which whosoever clings will despise the other. And so it will be until we discern that the Master is in fact only One, not two at all. And when Christ reigns over the whole of science—over all that is worthy to be called knowledge,—then we shall have an education in which heart, mind, and moral nature, shall find equal and true development; and in the heart and mind of those so taught there shall be no distraction between secular and sacred, no divided life from one half of which God is banished; but for these "there shall be," as the prophet says, "One Lord over all the earth; in that day there shall be One Lord, and His Name One."

APPENDIX V

CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF PSALMS

THE Lord's own words to His disciples assure us of "things written in the Psalms concerning" Him. (Luke xxiv. 44.) In the New Testament sixteen psalms are quoted as referring to Him ;* and there is nothing to show us that this is the whole number, although all the fundamental ones are doubtless in this list. Outside of it, the Rabbinic writers, though blind to Christ, rightly emphasize the twenty-first and seventy-second psalms also as Messianic ;† and the twentieth psalm can hardly be separated from the twenty-first. The tendency with some Christian writers has been to see Christ almost everywhere in them, while naturally the drift of the so-called "higher criticism" is all the other way : the effort to imagine the circumstances under which they were written, as well as the intention of the writers, necessarily leading them away from the *divine* intention, which is all-important. And when it can be boldly questioned, as by Cheyne, whether David was the writer of any of them, the apostle's comment, "he being a prophet . . . spake of . . . Christ (Acts ii. 30, 31) may be dismissed, as "contemporary *Jewish* exegesis," from all consideration.

It is only the knowledge of the structure of the book of Psalms as a whole that can show us how fully in place the Messianic psalms are, and define clearly their limits. They will then be seen in clear relation to those surrounding them, and in fact as the life-centre of the whole. As long as the individual psalms are looked at as in no particular order

* Ps. ii. viii. xvi. xviii. xxii. xl. xli. xlv. lxviii. lxix. xci. xcvii. cii. cix. cx. cxviii.

† The list given by Edersheim in his ninth Appendix to "The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," contains five psalms accepted throughout as Messianic : Ps. ii. xxi. xlv. lxxii. and cx., and seven others partially so, xviii. xxii. xl. lxi. lxviii. lxxxix. xcii. Other psalms are contained in the list, but not as having personal reference to Messiah.

or relation to one another, or the order a merely artificial one, so long, of course, it will be possible to find a Messianic psalm in any position whatever in the book. The divisions and their meaning once ascertained, each psalm will be found to have its place, from which it could not be removed without a gap resulting. The numerical structure is everywhere also a test and confirmation of the reality of this. My purpose now is very briefly to trace the connection of these Messianic psalms, both among themselves and with those in the midst of which they are,—certainly not scattered at random, nor without divine meaning in these connections.

The first book, as we have seen, is the largest in scope, and necessarily the introduction to all the rest. Its theme is in fact mainly Christ Himself, and that as the Source of blessing to His people. This people is Israel; and we must not forget this, which, so far from depriving us of our portion, only reminds us continually of the larger character of this, as "blessed with *all* spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." (Eph. i. 3.) There cannot therefore be a spiritual blessing from which we are shut out; while their being ours *in heavenly* places lifts us into the sphere to which Christ Himself belongs, and where we possess a relationship to Him of which the Psalms know nothing.

But our intelligence as to Scripture depends upon our taking it as it is written, and our spiritual profit also largely upon our distinguishing things that differ, that both *we* may have what is our own unmixed, and that Christ also may be seen in all His glories, and in connection with all the interests which are His. And these we must learn, not from any preconceptions of our own about them, but patiently and humbly as led of Scripture. God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, but deeper and higher every way.

In the first book there are three subdivisions, of which the first and third alike speak of Christ; while the second shows us rather the circumstances of the latter days, to which we find ourselves in the Psalms so constantly carried forward. The first subdivision (Ps. i–viii) speaks of Christ's dominion, King in Zion (Ps. ii), and Son of Man, the creation put under Him (Ps. viii). The first is His open claim, though resisted by man. The second is a secret told into the ear of faith alone.

The King! that is the first and last thought in the Psalms, whatever else may grow up around and unite itself to this: a King with power, although long patience may be exercised before it is put forth. Power: for not only is God for Him, but He is Son of God. Thus it is in the right hands; out of which it will never slip and never can be forced; and being divine power, it is a revelation. How long the world has been waiting wearily for this, without knowing for what it waited; nay, rejecting Him when He came in fulfillment of this very prophecy, to claim His right.

The King! because obedience is the very thing from which man has

broken away, and to which he must return in order to blessing. Thus the very first psalm is the psalm of obedience, while in the second is the One to whom it must be rendered; who as the Son of God is the Revealer of God; faith in whom turns back the heart to Him, and finds the blessing. We see why, then, it should be the first thought of Christ in the Psalms that He is King:—the proclamation of the King.

That this is not all, when the heart turns back to its allegiance, the psalms, that follow (iii.–vii) are proof enough. The remnant of true followers, amid the mass of those that reject Him, learn in the very trials that ensue from their true-heartedness the need of mercy because of sin; from whence but a little, and a new figure rises before them, not now of the Son of God, though with links of unmistakable connection with Him. It is now of a Son of man in whom both God is glorified and the dominion of man is restored; while along with this, there are thoughts of humiliation and the mysterious joy of a trodden wine-press,—intimations of fruitful suffering, by and by to be more at large declared.

The meaning here Israel as yet has not recognized, and will not until the day that they look upon Him whom they have pierced. But, united with the first picture—the Son of God joined to the Son of man—we have emphasized the two parts of a wondrous whole, in which a glory of God is manifested above the heavens, as His name is declared by it in all the earth: to us at least a clear outlining of what is to be filled up in the psalms that follow,—an inscription on the door of the temple of praise to Messiah's Name.

To this the second subdivision has nothing that I am aware to add. But with the third we come at once to the heart of our subject. Here we have Christ before us, not simply in His glory, but also in the path of suffering leading up to it, and in which we learn His perfection and the fullness of His grace toward us also. We find Him identifying Himself with His people, making their cause His own, and the consequences of this in the unequalled sorrow of the Cross; but as that in which the Son of man was glorified, and God was glorified in Him. His inmost heart is seen: we learn to know Him as we know no other, and are made His doubly, redeemed by His blood, and won by the perfection we have found in Him.

First of all in the sixteenth psalm, we see Him as a pilgrim on the way; as a servant also for the need of His people. His heart is with the saints; and the obedience, so new a thing for Him to render, is not to avail for Himself to spare Him one drop of the cup of sorrow He is to drink for others: it is an obedience by which *they* are to be made righteous. On the other hand, and none the less on this account, God is His all, "the measure of His portion, and of His cup;" and we find Him guided by His counsel, and maintained by Him in human weakness, perfect Leader in a path of faith in which we are to follow Him. We

see Him in it, down to death itself through which the "path of life" passes on up to the presence of God, whence the light also shines for us by the way which He has gone.

In the next psalm (xvii) we find Him, spite—nay, because of all that He is, the object of the hatred of the men of the world, and His pleading against this which, though made as in His own behalf, we find to be intercession for others, with whom He identifies Himself.

In the eighteenth, we have the answer of God to Him, which lifts Him into the place of power. Delivered from the strivings of the people, He is made the head of the nations. Here, of course, we are brought evidently to the latter days. Judgment has its course upon earth, the rod of power being in the hands of the rejected One, and long-suffering patience no longer holding back what is needed for the deliverance of His people and the blessing of the earth at large. For in result He praises among the nations, as the anointed King of all the earth. This is the close of the first series; and these psalms are all subjective—the utterances of the Messiah Himself.

In the next three, on the contrary, we have the utterances of faith as to Him, and thus the nineteenth psalm is accounted for as coming where it does in this series: creation and the law being now seen by it as the introduction to Christ. Thus the glory of the sun is dwelt upon—the typical picture of the Lord from the beginning of Genesis; and then the law is seen in its effects, by its own perfection convicting the soul of sin, beyond even the knowledge of the one who as the servant of the Lord seeks to be admonished by it. This prepares, as is evident, the way for sacrifice; but it is not to the sacrifices of the law that we now turn. No: the next psalm does indeed speak of sacrifice; but it is Another that offers it, and that other the King Himself. In His salvation His people shall rejoice, for it is the Name of the God of Jacob that is declared in it: as we should say, the God of Grace. The whole psalm is a prophecy of Christ and of His work, though in relation (as all through) with Israel, and the following psalm speaks of Him in His glory.

These are but hints of what atonement is. In the third series, however, it is fully declared with its blessed effects; and the twenty-second psalm returns once more from the objective to the subjective: no voice but His own can declare to us worthily the inmost heart of it.

The link with the day of atonement is shown in the third verse. The sufferer is undergoing what no righteous man ever did beside. A martyr for God, He is forsaken of God. And why? He answers His own question: it is because He who is the Holy One would dwell amid the praises of His people; and this was what (typically and governmentally only,) the blood of the sin-offering accomplished on the day of atonement. Here we see, then, the reality of what that sin-offering meant, and all other sufferings are as nothing compared with this. But

the latter part of the psalm shows the glorious results in blessings welling out in wider and wider circles to the ends of the earth. The name of God is newly declared to those in new relationship to Him who has accomplished the wondrous work, and His righteousness is declared in it to generations following.

The sin-offering psalm gives character in a certain way to all the remaining psalms of this first book. The twenty-third psalm shows us now the great Shepherd of the sheep brought again from the dead, and the pleasant pastures in which He leads His flock. The twenty-fourth, Jehovah's house established on the earth, and the people who enter it. Jehovah Himself enters it as King of glory to take His place among His ransomed ones.

This ends the nine psalms which are characteristically Messianic, and the fifteen psalms following are "remnant" psalms, or such as show us the exercises and experiences of the faithful in Israel, the background being circumstances of the latter days. But the apprehension of divine grace enters into them in a different manner from anything before. Sin is confessed, and God for His name's sake forgives as promptly as the confession is made. The twenty-fifth and thirty-second psalms are especially characteristic, and have much of the New Testament style, if they do not reach its standard. After these the first book closes with two psalms (xl. and xli), both of which speak once more of atonement, though in a different manner from before.

The fortieth psalm is the burnt-offering aspect of the cross, the Lord seen as come to do the will of God, His law (which man has continually broken) in His heart, and its provision of sacrifice realized as written of Him. The awful burden of sin is experienced; but not the forsaking of God endured.

It is striking that this comes at the end, as if it were almost an appendix to the book, and does not seem to be the basis of other experience psalms, as does the sin-offering psalm (xxii.). In fact, is not the value of the burnt-offering that which rather belongs to Christianity, though not altogether lacking in Israel's blessing? At any rate, there must be a reason for the supplementary place here occupied by the burnt-offering psalm.

The forty-first, as the closing psalm of the book, depicts the cross as the stumbling-block to unbelief, while faith, penetrating the disguise assumed by love in this "poor man's" humiliation, finds blessing from Jehovah: a natural and solemn admonition at the close of the book. Thus we see throughout how the Messianic psalms govern it, and that it has a fullness and completeness of its own in this respect, no main feature being altogether omitted, though some may be more fully developed elsewhere.

The second book is more limited in scope and more external in character. Though redemption be a leading feature of it, it is more a re-

demption by power than by purchase, and seen rather in its effects for man therefore, than from the divine side of what sin is before God. The sixty-ninth is its psalm of atonement, and presents the trespass-offering side of it. But here again Christianity had to bring out the full character of this, and the "fifth part more" of the trespass-offering cannot be as yet developed. The Kingship of Christ is, of course, the prominent feature in the psalm which speaks of Him.

The structure resembles that of the first book, the Messianic psalms being found in the first and third subdivisions, the second being devoted to psalms of experience, which are not however, excluded from the other parts.

The first subdivision opens with the cry of the remnant in their distress, in answer to which in the forty-fifth psalm we have the glorious picture of Christ as King. Still more plainly than in the second psalm, God and man meet in Him; and for the first time, and the only one in the Psalms, He is seen as Israel's Bridegroom. His rule is righteous and eternal: all enemies are put down, and the nations worship. This is the only view of Christ in the first part.

The second gives the circumstances of the last days, the rule of Antichrist and not Christ, and then the exercises of the people, looking on toward deliverance. The third closes the book with a series of psalms which put before us Christ as the Restorer of the nation: first, as the King of Israel, taking up their cause as their Representative before God to bring them to blessing; and then in His work on the cross as involved in this.

In the first series, the sixty-first psalm shows us the King's vows as heard by God, and the possession of those that fear God's name given to Him in consequence. He sojourns in the Tent which God had pitched among men, and dwells there as King in the presence of God forever, the eternal link between God and man.

The sixty-second psalm has in it no clear evidence of Messianic character, except its place in this series between two psalms of the King. As the experience of the Leader and Finisher of faith it is, however, perfectly suited; being the utter rejection of all other dependences than God Himself. And after this the sixty-third psalm breathes after God as seen in the sanctuary, whose loving-kindness is better than life. Thus the soul follows hard after Him, while its enemies drop off and are destroyed. The next psalm is but a lament over the folly and wickedness of man; but the sixty-fifth with its single and plural voices points to the settlement of the deeper question of how the iniquities of those for whom their Head has undertaken are purged away, and through the Chosen One of God now dwelling in the Sanctuary, they too are satisfied with the goodness of God's house established in their midst. The blessing following runs through two more psalms; then in the sixty-eighth there bursts out a strain of glory and triumph, in which God is

celebrated under all His Names, which have all been illustrated and endeared to them through Him who has gone up on high, leading captivity captive, and receiving gifts for men: yea, (they acknowledge in humble gratitude) even for the rebellious, that Jah Elohim, might dwell among them. Now the dove's wings are over them, the beauty of Christ is seen upon them; and under the leadership of their glorious and divine King, Israel's tribes throng up to the sanctuary. Thus the first series of psalms ends.

The second bases the blessing on the sacrifice of Christ—on atonement, which here, in connection with Israel's restoration has its restitutive aspect, as in the trespass-offering. As the result of this, in the seventy-first psalm Israel is seen reviving, taking hold of Jehovah's strength alone, and making mention only of Jehovah's righteousness. While in the seventy-second psalm the whole earth comes under the rule of the Saviour-King, who is seen in character as a true Melchizedek. Thus the salvation-book of the Psalms is completed. That it is Jewish and in sphere earthly is plain, and may be a disappointment to us; but we may be sure that inspiration has made no mistake: the limits of the law are too narrow to contain the fullness of the Christian gospel, and the divine side of the work of Christ has been more fully expressed already in the opening book. The essential outlines are, of course, preserved.

The theme of the third book, as we know, is holiness. Much briefer than either of the preceding, the Messianic psalms are in the same proportion, while they are also much fainter sketches of the commanding figure for which we are looking.

Very much as in the first subdivision of the second book, the first appearance of Christ here is in answer to the cry of distress on the part of the people. The earth and all its inhabitants are dissolved, but at the appointed time for which He has been waiting, He sets up the pillars of the earth once more. It has been dissolved by its corruption: He establishes it by just judgment carried out. He is the divine Interpreter, and with God alone it is to abase or to exalt. For this, however, that any may be exalted, grace must come in, and not merely judgment. Grace is His delight, judgment His strange work: and so we find here. "I will psalm," He says "unto the God of Jacob: the God of Jacob is the God of grace. All this is in character with the third book.

In the eightieth psalm, which is again the third psalm of a second section of the same division, there is just an appeal to God to act in their behalf through Messiah, "the Man of Thy right hand, the Son of man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself." Here they have found the secret of blessing, and the next psalm shows the light of divine favor beginning to shine upon them.

The cry of the eighty-fourth psalm is quite similar to this: "Behold,

O God our shield, and look upon the face of Thine Anointed;" and in the next psalm we find all the attributes of God united in the salvation of His people. While in the next two psalms, but more mysteriously, we have Christ in the form of a Servant, owned, in the last, by God and by His people: all their fresh springs found in Him.

But one other psalm in this book speaks of Christ,—the eighty-ninth, —in which He is seen as the One contemplated in the covenant with David. Here we have typical prophecy, and again the King, though to be made of God His first-born, supreme as to the kings of the earth.

The fourth book has two psalms of special importance, and is remarkable for the development of its blessed theme. It begins with a psalm of Moses, a lament over the generation dying in the wilderness, which is but a typical example of man's doom as man. The reason of it is, he has lost the knowledge of God, who has always been a habitation for men, but men have turned their backs upon Him. Of this departure from Him death is the universal witness. With God is the fountain of life; turning from Him, man has accepted death as His portion, but which as an admonition God would have him lay to heart.

But he cannot find the way back: first, man is helpless to recover himself. The second psalm of the book (the ninety-first) introduces us, therefore, to the Second Man.

Here is One who has never wandered. He has "made Jehovah, even the Most High, His habitation," and He can claim, therefore, all the consequences of this. Dwelling in His secret place—secret, alas, now to man at large—He abides therefore under the shadow of the Almighty. Plague and pestilence pass by Him harmless; the young lion and serpent He can trample under foot. The angels have Him in charge, lest He should dash His foot against a stone. Here is a Man, in short, with whom (as in the next psalm) earth can enjoy once more a Sabbath-rest; and the world be established on immovable foundations. (Ps. xciii. 2.)

But this shows no title as yet for the failed children of the first man; and though there are assurances given as to the *righteous*, that leaves, as we know, Job's question unanswered. Meanwhile Jehovah's kingdom is seen as coming, then as come, and the second subdivision ends amid the praises of the whole earth (Ps. c.); and still this vital question remains unanswered.

With the third subdivision again a Messianic psalm appears, the old refrain, sounding through the whole book, of a King of righteousness. The King after Jehovah's heart is come; and we readily connect Him with the Second Man of the ninety-first psalm: He is King of Israel now; and when we go on to the 102d, Israel's time has come for blessing, and Zion's to be built up once more: the throne is ready for the King, but in this psalm where is the King?

The voice here is of One not in power but in weakness—in extreme

distress. Nay, Jehovah's hand is upon Him and in wrath: He is dying, His days shortened, and He contrasts these shortened years with God's eternity in His cry to Him. Is this the King of Israel? Nay, is this the glorious Man who has the secret of life and of enduring blessing?

The answer is an amazing one, and it is God Himself who gives it. He is not only King of Israel: He is not only the Second Man, over whom death has no title: He is *God Himself;* He is Creator of heaven and earth; He is the deathless One, the fountain of Life Himself. "The Second Man is the Lord from heaven;" and in the sacrifice which is here accomplished, divine-human arms hold us fast to God.

Although the fifth book is the longest of the whole five, there are but six psalms that are Messianic; and this is to be accounted for, no doubt, by its deuteronomic, governmental character.

The 109th and 110th go together as the divine ways with the Perfect Man. They are complete contrasts: the first being One who for His love finds only hatred; until love itself can only pronounce the doom of its rejectors. The 110th is that which speaks directly of His Melchizedek Priesthood. He is exalted to God's right hand, and waiting for His enemies to be made His footstool, and for an obedient people to be made willing in the day of His power. Here the principle in divine government is contained in the last verse, though not apart from the psalm before it. The path of humiliation and suffering has ever been the way ordained of God to lead to glory, a principle which our Lord distinctly enunciated for His disciples, as He accepted it for Himself, drank only of the brook in the way—took but the refreshment provided of God in the common way of faith and patience in which He led His followers. His trials have enabled Him to be the true Priest, the sympathetic Intercessor that His people crave, as well as the truly human King, the succorer of the needy.

The 118th psalm shows us the Stone which the builders rejected becoming the Head of the Corner: and here His humiliation is nevertheless the stumbling-stone to men: the Stone was low enough for them to stumble over, and yet thus for the foundation-stone upon which faith builds, and the temple to God's praise alone can stand.

Among the "songs of degrees," three short psalms alone remain. The first (Ps. 132d) turns upon the history of David and the house of God, and David is here plainly a type of a higher King. The promise as to his house is connected with that as regards Zion and the dwelling-place of God in it.

In the next psalm we have not David but Aaron, and the unity of brotherhood in Israel at last established among her jarring tribes: a spiritual unity now produced by the Spirit out-poured upon the head of her true High-priest, of whom it is here implied that Aaron was but a figure. In these two psalms, therefore, the Melchizedek Priest-King

is again before us; and the following brief psalm gives us the blessing of God by man and of man by God which is the glorious work of the true Melchizedek.

Brief as this outline of the Messianic psalms is, it is surely enough to show the divine order in which they are arranged, and the fullness of the presentation of Christ which is found in them. His peculiar relation to us, of course, will not be found. Throughout the Old Testament times it was a "mystery hid in God." (Eph. iii. 4–9.)